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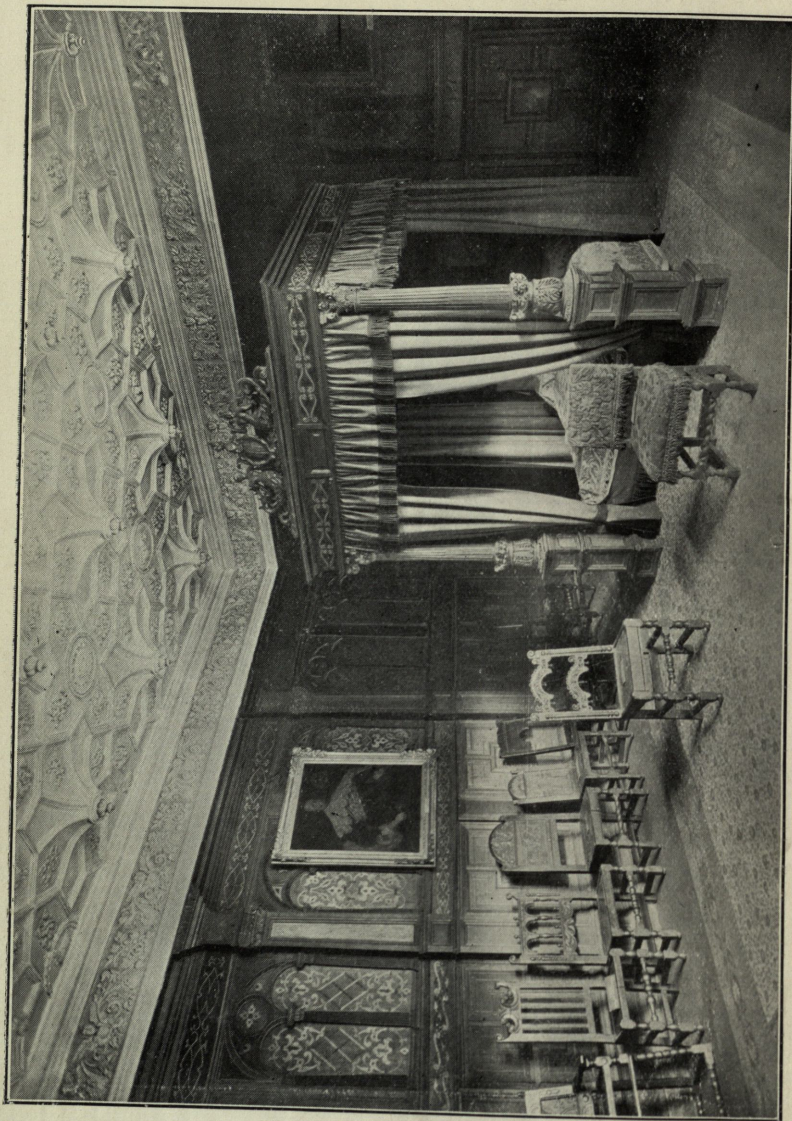


FIG. 65.—A PANELLED OAK ROOM from Sizergh Castle. ENGLISH; date 1568.
Reproduced from a photograph taken for "The Art Journal."
(In the Museum, No. 3-1891.)

BOARD OF EDUCATION, SOUTH KENSINGTON,
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM.

ANCIENT & MODERN FURNITURE AND WOODWORK

VOLUME I.

BY

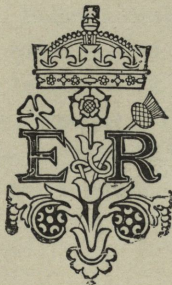
JOHN HUNGERFORD POLLEN, M.A.,

FORMERLY FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD;

REVISED BY

T. A. LEHFELDT.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



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PREFACE.

The preparation of the new edition of the Handbook on Furniture and Woodwork was undertaken by Mr. J. H. Pollen, whose former connection with the Victoria and Albert Museum and previous work in the description of the national collections, together with his unique technical knowledge of the subject, specially fitted him for this work.

It was intended that Mr. Pollen's small handbook published in 1875 should be revised and extended to two parts so as to include a history of English and foreign furniture and woodwork, but Mr. Pollen's death occurred at a time when he had prepared only part of the book comprising the general introduction to woodwork and the description of English furniture in the Museum. The completion of the present volume has been carried out by Mr. T. A. Lehfeldt—an assistant keeper of the Museum.

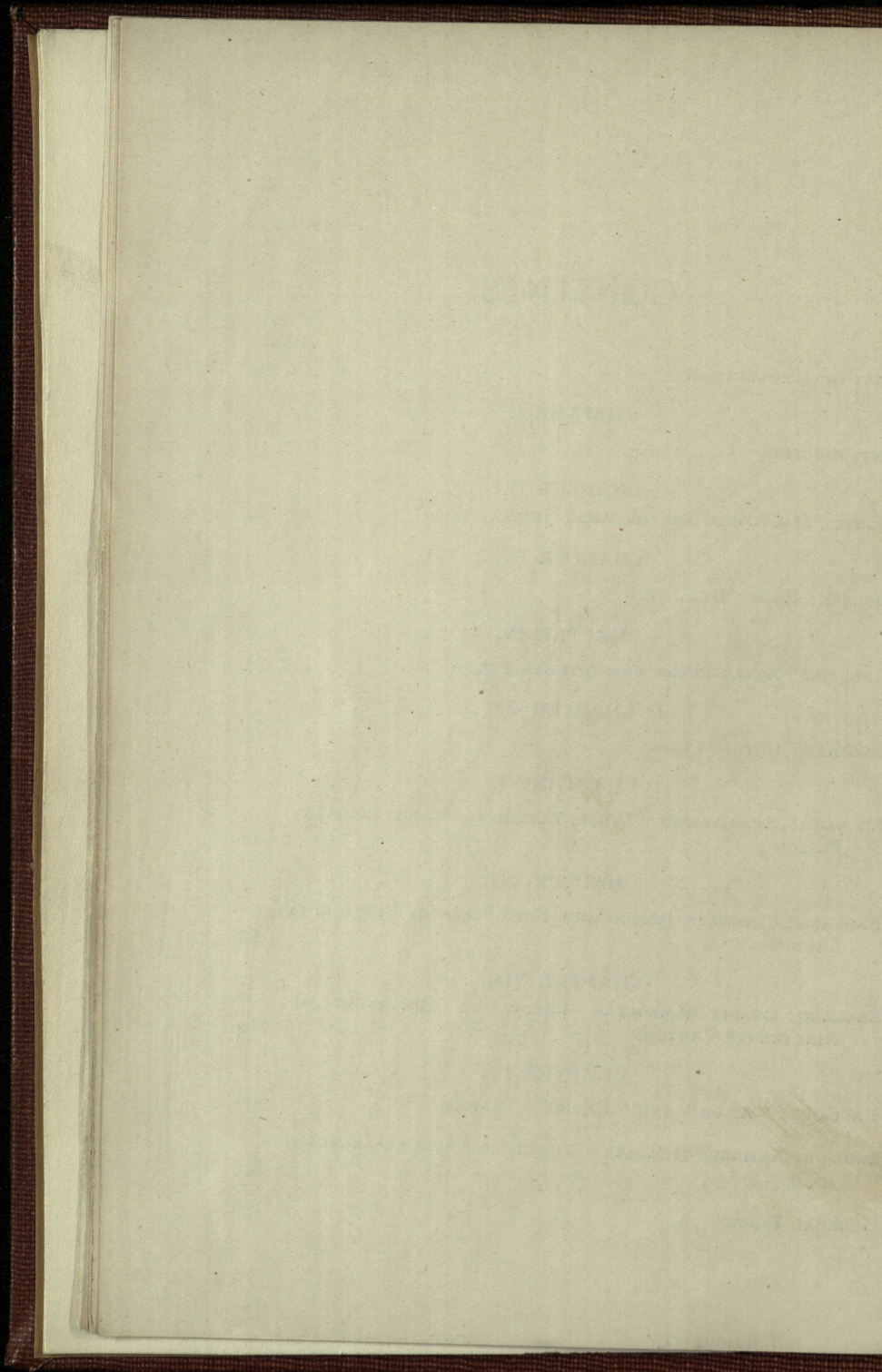
PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the study of the history of the United States. It is designed for students of American history and for anyone interested in the development of the nation. The book covers the period from the early colonial years to the present, and includes a detailed examination of the major events and figures of American history. The author has drawn on a wide range of sources, including primary documents, secondary literature, and his own research, to provide a balanced and authoritative account of the past. The book is written in a clear and engaging style, and includes numerous illustrations and maps to help illustrate the points made in the text. It is hoped that this book will be a valuable resource for students and scholars alike, and that it will provide a new perspective on the history of the United States.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

The word "Furniture" is of obscure origin, but it is supposed to be connected with the Old High German *frummen*, to accomplish or supply. Whilst originally implying a stock or supply of anything, its meaning gradually became limited to fittings and movable articles in a house or other building, and it is now almost entirely confined to the latter sense. The term, *woodwork*, needs no definition, and the two together cover an enormous range of objects which can be but cursorily dealt with in these volumes.

The history of furniture in those countries where its course can be clearly followed is found usually to display an orderly development corresponding to the growth in refinement of manners, the gradual perfecting of tools and the increasing skill of the workmen; and it may reasonably be assumed that this has been the case in other countries where, from various causes, it may be impossible to fully trace its history. In order to follow the general lines of this development, it is necessary to begin by considering the furniture of the antique world, for in this branch of human industry, as in most others, the modern is the outcome and inheritor of the ancient world, the old ideas and symbols deeply influencing modern thought. In the course of this study it will also be seen how largely contemporary and especially neighbouring nations have affected each other in their sumptuary arts. This influence is a living and powerful force which may be observed actively at work to-day,

as it has been, for good or for evil, during the whole course of history.

Wood is the material chiefly used in the manufacture of furniture, and whether as the external and decorated portion or as the base, it may be said to form part of almost every article of furniture. It may be remarked here that of those objects which would naturally be classed under woodwork, as distinct from furniture, such as groups, statues, busts, panels with figure subjects, the great majority were designed as portions of furniture intended for use, and that comparatively few and those chiefly of later date, were made simply as decorative objects. In connection with this it may further be noted that the practice of confining figure decoration, and other decoration as well, to objects of use has had a great and salutary influence on the art of designing, and that in two ways. First, in teaching the designer restraint by compelling him to subordinate decoration to the general lines of the object to be decorated, and secondly, in stimulating his skill and inventiveness to make the most of the space at his disposal. Those periods of artistic production are rightly considered the best in which together with technical excellence in execution, these rules have been most carefully observed.

Furniture, to use the term in its widest sense, may be divided into two classes, the one fixed in position, the other movable, this latter of course being what is usually nowadays understood by the word. To the former belongs whatever woodwork is used in the decoration or fitting up of the inside or outside of buildings, such as panelling, doors, staircases, chimney-pieces, ceilings, floors, house-fronts, and various other details, many of which have been the objects of the greatest skill and the richest fancy. Among the most splendid examples in this group are the screens and stalls in churches and cathedrals.

The second group includes an immense variety of articles for the service and pleasure of man, for secular and ecclesiastical use, for indoors and out of doors, in peace and in war. To name but a few, it includes among large objects, tables, chairs, coffers, cupboards, chests of drawers; and of those of smaller size, caskets and boxes in countless varieties, desks, cases for toilet necessities, bellows, spinning-wheels and other utensils of various sorts; games, as boards for chess, backgammon and draughts. Then for outdoor use there are vehicles of all kinds and sizes, from the ponderous state coach to the lighter *calèche*, the state-barge and sleighs of fantastic shape.

We may here make a rapid review of the history of art in furniture. It begins naturally with that of the oldest civilisation, namely, Egypt. Owing to special conditions so many models and actual specimens of furniture have survived from its early period, that we have a more complete knowledge of ancient Egyptian furniture and woodwork than of those of many later nations. The Egyptians had great skill in rendering the human figure, with certain strict limitations; their leading idea in form was solidity, and they had an oriental love of vivid colour. The next nations in order of time who have left no descendants as nations, are the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Jews. Our knowledge of the furniture of the two first is derived almost entirely from a few remains of sculpture. Of the furniture of the ancient Jews our knowledge is even more scanty. They do not appear to have had any native genius or taste for art, possibly because their thoughts and aspirations were so greatly absorbed by religious ideals. Their furniture and its decoration were probably that of the Assyrians and other neighbouring nations.

The Greeks are next dealt with. This gifted people had an

exquisite and unequalled sense of beauty in form and decoration, and their influence over contemporary and succeeding art has been profound. This influence was exercised largely through the Romans, who by their military and political genius became masters of the world's labours, including the art of the Greeks; but the artistic sense of the former was by no means so delicate as that of the latter. A feature of Roman art as distinct from Greek was the very general use of the round arch. The gorgeousness and ostentation of Roman furniture was continued by the Byzantine Empire and chiefly through them transmitted to the rising nations of the West. During the Byzantine period the great Moslem power arose in Asia Minor and swept victoriously along the southern fringe of Europe, overthrowing Constantinople, with its classic art, and almost absorbing Spain. Mohammedans were forbidden by their religion to copy the human figure; their art therefore was confined to floral and geometrical elements, with which they produced the style of decoration called Arabesque, and a peculiar form of pointed arch. A particular phase of Mohammedan art developed in Egypt and Sicily was called Saracenic. Meanwhile classic art in Italy, decaying amid the incursions of the northern barbarians, developed into the Romanesque as the barbarians gradually settled in the lands they had conquered. From the Romanesque art arose Gothic, characterized by the use of the pointed arch, which for several centuries was supreme throughout Europe, with the exception of Italy, where classic ideals survived and were only slightly modified by the Gothic. In the fifteenth century a revival of classic art took place in Italy and gradually spread over Europe, in its turn extinguishing the Gothic style. This change was completed in the sixteenth century, about which time modern Europe may be said to have begun; since then art in furniture, founded on the

classic, has passed through various phases, which have been more or less general throughout Europe, with special modifications of national styles.

In the East fashions in art are both less changeable and more difficult to trace. The Greeks, influenced by the art of ancient Persia and of Egypt, reached a high pitch of artistic development, and in turn carried their art into western Asia as far as India, in the train of Alexander's conquests. Later the Mohammedan wave swept over the same ground, and still remains in possession of the greater part. A native art sprang up in India, and continues to exist, though considerably modified by successive influence of Greeks and Mohammedans. It is marked by strong liking for colour and by a tropical richness of imagination often running into extravagance. In the extreme East the Chinese early evolved an art combining great beauty with much of the grotesque and *bizarre*. It exercised great influence over surrounding nations, such as Tibet, Burma, Siam, and especially Japan. The people of the last-named country had an artistic sense comparable in fineness with that of the ancient Greeks; while their figure treatment is frequently marred by exaggeration amounting to grotesqueness, their purely decorative art is exquisitely quaint and charming.

The shapes and sizes of most things of use are determined by their purpose or by certain natural conditions, as for instance, the height of tables and chairs and the length of bedsteads, and in this direction there is but small scope for variation. The details of ornamentation, however, admit of a variety that is practically infinite.

We now proceed to enumerate and describe in some detail the principal methods of decoration that have been employed, some of them from the very dawn of history. One group of methods is that in which carving and cutting enter as the

characteristic feature. Carving is, and has been in almost all periods, universally used and ranges from the crudest attempts to masterpieces of art. In former times it was often heightened by colours and gilding, frequently with splendid effect, as may be seen in numerous examples from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Museum.* Carving may be entirely detached from a background, when it is known as "in the round" and is principally used in figures and pinnacles; but the most usual form of carving is merely "in relief," known as high or low relief according as the ground is more or less deeply cut away. Again, the design may be sunk below the surface of the wood, in which case the carving is known as incised work.† One kind of this carving has no relief and depends for its effect simply on outline. A simple and easily worked form is called "chip" carving, a name which sufficiently describes the method. From the ease with which it is practised and the few tools required it has been very generally used and is found excellently done even by savage peoples, whose other carvings are of the rudest description. In another method of sunk carving, known as *cavo-rilievo*, there is relief, the highest part, however, not being above the surface of the object decorated. It was skilfully used by the ancient Egyptians. Again, the wood may be pierced and the design then shown in openwork; this may be wrought by the chisel or by the fretsaw, but work by the latter tool is usually thin and flat in quality. A mode of decoration having the appearance of carving is sometimes adopted, in which the wood, after being damped and heated to a sufficient temperature, is subjected to pressure by metal dies. This method, however, of which

* The Victoria and Albert Museum is throughout referred to as 'the Museum.'

† The term *intaglio* is used of this method when applied to the cutting of precious stones.

there is a small example in the Museum (No. 168—1897), is not recommended as it gives a hard and mechanical result. Finally, the surface of the object to be decorated may be etched or engraved; one branch of this class is “poker” work, so-named from the designs being burnt in by means of heated metal instruments and sand.

Another group of decorative methods is based upon the applying of wood and other substances to a wooden base. This work is of two kinds; in one, called *appliqué*, the decorating substances are applied to the surface of the object, in the other the design is ploughed out of the surface and wood or other material inserted, thus forming a sort of picture. This latter method is called inlaying (*tarsia*, *intarsiatura*, in Italian) and the substance put in is termed the inlay. Inlays are of the most varied nature, for instance, wood, especially the finer and more closely grained varieties, in their natural colours or stained, metals, as gold, silver, brass, copper, tin, lead, in various mixtures and alloys; under this heading also come inlaying with metal pins (*piqué-work*) and the ingenious use of nail-heads in decorative arrangement. Marbles, precious stones and coloured glass are used with fine effect for inlaying, as are also ivory and bone, shells of different kinds, chiefly mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell, and lastly, black and coloured compositions.

In *appliqué* work, two methods are to be distinguished. In the first the applied material, almost always carved or moulded, is in relief and does not cover the whole ground. This form of ornamentation was largely in vogue in the seventeenth century. The second method is called veneering or overlaying, and consists in completely covering another, usually common wood as pine or deal, with a thin layer of finer wood or other suitable material, such as metal, shell or ivory, so that the object appears to be made of the more

valuable substance. Veneering, like marquetry, requires highly developed tools and appliances, and consequently is only possible under settled economic conditions; objects decorated by these methods are always given a high polish which brings out the beauty of the grain of the wood. These forms of decorations were, on the one hand, probably adopted in consequence of the supply of the better woods becoming less plentiful, and on the other hand became more and more extensively used as tools and machinery were gradually perfected and mechanical processes grew more familiar. It cannot be doubted, however, that they were symptoms of decay in artistic feeling. There is a further process in this group, called *marquetry*,* which combines veneering and inlaying. In this method the wooden base is covered by a thin layer of a finer wood (or sometimes another material) out of which the design is cut; the design is then filled in with other woods, metal, shell, etc., the whole constituting a species of mosaic. This form of decoration came into use late in the sixteenth century and has continued in favour up to the present time. By staining the woods and introducing shading by means of heated sand highly pictorial effects were produced, a favourite subject being elaborate architectural views, which were often clever studies in perspective. Many fine examples are to be seen in the Museum, some of which will subsequently be mentioned in detail. The earlier pieces were chiefly in wood, heightened sometimes by small pieces of ivory, bone, shell, or metal; but in the seventeenth century there was developed in France a particular form, in which the materials used were chiefly thin sheets of brass and tortoiseshell. To this the name of *Boule* (*Bouille*, *Buhl*) has been given after the

* From Fr. *Marqueterie*, from *marqueter*, to spot, to inlay, from *marque*, a mark. [*Imperial Dictionary*, 1903.]

cabinet maker, Charles André Boule (or Boulle)* who invented or at any rate was principally instrumental in developing the art. He was one of the most skilful and noted among the band of artists and craftsmen employed by Louis XIV., who raised to its height the grandiose style of the period.

A feature in marquetry work, and one which by economizing material cheapened production, was the method of designing and working in "counter," as it is called. In this method an exactly similar design is cut out of two different materials, as for instance, a light and a dark wood, or brass and tortoiseshell, and then the designs and grounds interchanged, so that in one piece tortoiseshell would be in brass, while in its fellow brass would be in tortoiseshell. Thus waste of material was greatly diminished.

A peculiar method of marquetry is practised to this day in Bombay, which was introduced from Shiraz in Persia into Sind towards the end of the eighteenth century, and thence into Bombay in the early part of the nineteenth century. The materials are tin wire, sandal wood, ebony, *sappan* (brazil) wood, ivory (white and stained green), and stag's horn. The process of manufacture is as follows: the materials, except the wire, are cut into thin strips usually of triangular or lozenge-shaped section, which are then by the medium of a colourless glue fastened together with the tin wire, so that the cross-section shews the desired unit of pattern for the body of the work or the border. Then cross-sections are made of about the thickness of a sixpence and glued on to the base. A precisely similar manufacture has long been practised at Tunbridge Wells, where it is known as Tunbridge ware. It is, however, dying out, and in 1900† there were only two makers existing. A notable specimen of

* Born, 1642; died, 1732.

† See "An Old English Industry" in *The Sketch*, Aug. 29, 1900.

Tunbridge work in the Museum, a backgammon board of the time of Charles II., will be described in another chapter.

A small branch of art allied to marquetry is straw-work, which was practised in Europe for a hundred years or more till the beginning of the nineteenth century, and also in Japan with very charming results. The following was the process adopted in England; dried grasses and straw were split and cut into the required shapes, and afterwards coloured and shaded by being steeped, it is said, in infusions of tea. They were then stuck on a base, either of wood, usually pine, or of *papier mâché*, so as to form designs and even pictures. There are several examples, principally workboxes, in the Museum. An unimportant but curious method of decoration in this group, of which a few specimens are met with now and again, consisted in covering the surface of the object with small coils of paper laid on their ends so that the edge of the paper was uppermost; the coils were coloured and gilt to form simple patterns. There is a box in the Museum with this decoration (No. 1009—1901), made probably about 1800. Parquetry* is a form of marquetry on a larger and more solid scale applied chiefly to flooring. The designs are in the great majority of cases geometrical.

A third group of decorative methods deals with treatment of surfaces, whether flat or in relief, with materials applied by means of a liquid medium, such as colours, gilding, lacquers and varnishes; in this group may also be included polishing. The various methods of painting are distemper or tempera, oil, water-colour, and encaustic. Distemper, in which opaque colour is ground up with size and water, was largely used by the ancient Egyptians and in the East. Oil and water-colour painting have, since their introduction, also been in general

* From Fr. *parqueterie*, from *parquet*, an inlaid floor, a diminutive of *parc*, an inclosure.

use for decoration, though chiefly in Europe. Encaustic painting, in which the vehicle is heated wax, produces very durable results and appears to have been much practised by the ancients, but in modern times this form of art has been but little employed. Many examples remain in the shape of portrait heads used in mummy-cases of the Egypto-Roman period.

Gilding, which is one of the most extensively used, as it is one of the most splendid forms of decoration, is met with at nearly all periods and in most countries. The gold was formerly much more thickly applied than now and was doubtless in some cases laid on in plates, in the so-called gold furniture, just as silver of considerable thickness is found in silver furniture; but in ancient times gold leaf almost as thin as at present used was produced, and is found in Egyptian remains. Gilding is now performed either with gold leaf or with gold dust. To gild wood effectively the surface must first be treated with a coating of whiting and size, called priming; then with a layer of red or yellow colour to heighten the brilliancy of the gold. Armenian bole used to be employed for this purpose. In works in relief the wood is usually first roughly carved and then the mouldings and ornaments are finished in detail with a composition ("compo") of fine glue, white resin, linseed oil and whiting. The gold can be laid on by two processes, known respectively as oil-gilding and water-gilding, the latter being used chiefly for flat work. Imitations of gilding are produced by the use of various preparations of bronze and also by the application of transparent varnishes over a yellow colour, but these lack the lustre of true gilding.

A notable development of the art of modelling in composition, and one in which most beautiful work has been produced, is decoration with gesso and its allied preparation, stucco. These two substances, so alike in appearance and use have a marked difference in the fact that water injures gesso, but

hardens stucco,* consequently gesso is not suited for external decoration. It is used for smaller work than stucco and is laid on by brushwork or by means of moulds upon a ground of linen. A striking example of this latter method is a coffer in the museum (No. 317-1894). Gesso work is sometimes met with in its natural colours but is generally painted and gilt. Stucco is found to be more suitable for heavier work whether for exterior or interior architectural decoration.

Lacquers and varnishes, as regards their substance, have much in common, but in decorative art the term lacquer is generally applied to the opaque resinous substance used with colour as a form of decoration in itself, while varnishes are understood to be somewhat similar substances used to heighten the effect of other decorative materials and require, therefore, to be transparent. The basis of lacquers, properly so-called, is resin lac, and of varnishes, drying oil and resinous substances, the chief of which are copal, lac, rosin, and mastic. What is technically known as lacquering in England is really varnish applied to metal work. Real lacquer-work has long been extensively produced in the East, one variety of it, as practised in China and particularly in Japan, being especially celebrated for its beauty and value. The material used in Japan is an exudation from the lacquer-tree (*Rhus vernicifera*). This substance, after being refined, is applied in a succession of layers which are each carefully dried and polished by certain processes. In the second half of the seventeenth century the Dutch brought a knowledge of this art to Europe and it was soon introduced into England, where, under the name of japanning, it became very popular

* This is accounted for by the fact that a chief ingredient in gesso is whiting or chalk (carbonate of lime), which is washed away by water, whereas stucco contains plaster of Paris (sulphate of lime), which hardens with water.

and remained so during a great part of the eighteenth century.

Polishing applied to woods is the result of friction with a medium of wax or some similar lubricant softened with spirit, and the process is used to develop the beauty of the grain of the wood. A comparatively modern process, known as "French" polishing, consists in covering the surface with shellac dissolved in methylated spirits.

Furniture of any kind pre-supposes tools, and sharp-edged tools were necessary for the production of such furniture as the Egyptians, the earliest people of whom we have record, possessed. They must have had, even in that early age, hammers, chisels, axes or adzes, saws, gouges, awls, and some sort of lathe. These may not have been and probably were not so elaborate, various, or highly finished as those now used, but they were adequate for the creation of objects of high artistic value, for artistic feeling and the skilled hand more than compensate for inferiority of tools.

CHAPTER II.

EGYPT; BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA; JUDÆA.

Though the history of Egypt is the oldest known to us, yet we have a far more intimate and exact knowledge of the daily life and surroundings of the ancient Egyptians than of many civilised people of later date. To this fact two causes have chiefly contributed. One is to be found in the deep-seated faith of the old inhabitants of Misraim in the life of man after death and his spirit's future return to the body, which induced them to mummify their dead and, further, with the make-believe simplicity of children, to surround the corpse with all the materials of daily life, in actual objects, models or pictures. The other cause is the extreme dryness of the Egyptian climate, which has preserved from decay some of the most delicate and at the same time most instructive records, such as mural paintings, and enabled them to reach us in the most marvellous freshness. It is thus possible for us to re-constitute an Egyptian dwelling with its contents.

Despite the great amount of study and research that has been bestowed upon Egyptian history it still presents several gaps and its chronology is very uncertain. It has been found most convenient to consider it under dynasties, thirty in number, from the earliest historic time down to the conquest of Egypt by the Persians, when pure Egyptian art began rapidly to decay and to be permeated by foreign ideas. The dynasties are grouped under the "Old Kingdom" (Dynasty I. to X.), the "Middle" (Dynasty XI. to XVI.), and the "New Kingdom" (Dynasty XVII. to XXX.).

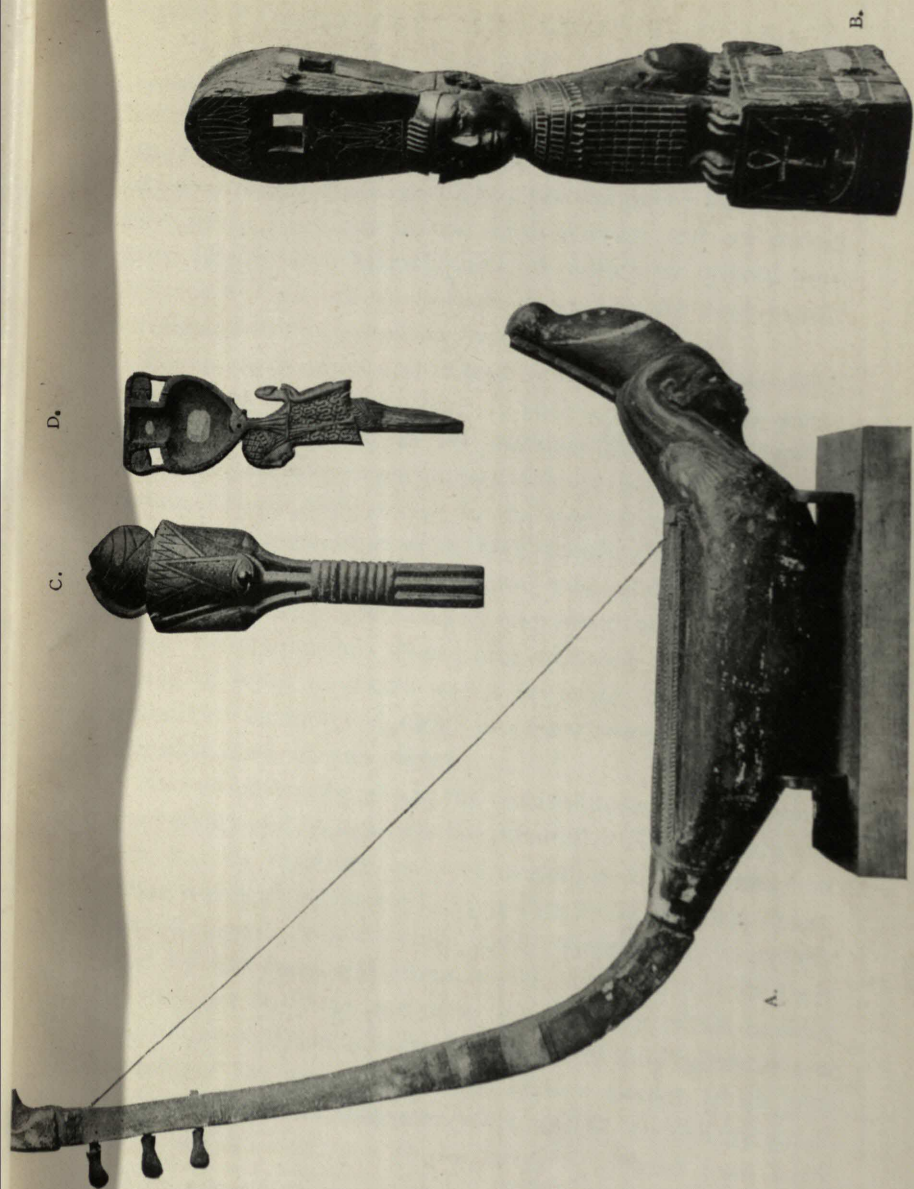


FIG. 1.—(A.) HARP, painted. (B.) LEG of Chair or Couch. (C, D.) TWO WOODEN PERFUME SPOONS. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN.
(In the British Museum.)



During the "Old Kingdom" Egyptian art appears at its best, with a freedom and a freshness not seen later. Some beautiful specimens of wood-carving of this period are preserved in Cairo Museum. They are sycamore panels from the tomb of Hesy late in the third dynasty, and are carved with figures and hieroglyphics of admirable vigour and delicacy.* But at all periods Egyptian art was closely circumscribed by conventional rules.

Colour, most vivid and indeed at times garish, as would be expected in a people dwelling in such a climate, was freely used. All woodwork, as for instance the harp shown in FIG. 1, and furniture were painted unless otherwise decorated; so was all sculpture, except in the case of very hard stone which was susceptible of a high polish. Woodwork, besides being painted, was decorated with gilding and sometimes plated with gold, carved and inlaid with fine woods, ivory, metal, precious stones and coloured glass; the inlaying of ivory in ebony was a favourite method. Sometimes two or more of these processes were united in the ornamentation of one object.

The predominating idea in the architecture of the Egyptians was solidity and its type was the pyramid. This idea appears also in their furniture, as is evidenced in their stands and tables with wide spreading legs (*see* FIG. 2) and in their pylon-shaped boxes. Wood being easily worked was naturally used by the early Egyptians, as by other nations in their infancy, for buildings and other purposes, for which in later times stone and iron were employed. Only the slightest traces remain of the woodwork of the earliest period, which goes back more than six thousand years and of wooden buildings none, but the existence of the latter is inferred from early

* Illustrated in Perrot and Chipiez, *History of Ancient Egyptian Art*, and Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt* [1894], Vol. I.

sarcophagi in the form of houses, and from the employment in stone buildings of methods peculiar to wood construction.

The chief native woods were sycamore, acacia (*sont*), some kinds of palm and the tamarisk, but these were not suitable for fine work. Statues of large size were made up of several pieces, but the tendency was to produce small objects which could be carved out of one piece. From an early period foreign woods, such as cedar, were imported.

It will be appropriate to consider first the objects concerned in the preservation of the dead, as so much of the thought and work of the Egyptians was devoted to that end. The coffins were usually made of wood, but under the Ptolemies and the Romans hard stone was occasionally used. In the British Museum is the wood coffin of Men-kau-rā (Mycerinus), a king of the fourth dynasty, about 3633 B.C.; it is without paintings, but on the cover was originally a human face formed of several pieces of wood pegged together, and two projections representing knees, while a fine deeply-cut inscription in two lines of hieroglyphics runs lengthwise from head to foot. This appears to have been the type during the first six dynasties.

During the eleventh and twelfth dynasties also this form seems to have been followed, but a more usual type of coffin was of rectangular shape with sides of great thickness. Both kinds were ornamented with painted decoration, generally of an inferior kind, the coffins themselves being of very rough workmanship. There were, however, exceptions, as the beautiful gilded wooden coffin of An-antef, a king of the eleventh dynasty.* About this time a very characteristic form was introduced, coffins being shaped to follow roughly the outlines of the body; the head and face were most developed, and the arms and hands also sometimes shown in

* In the British Museum.

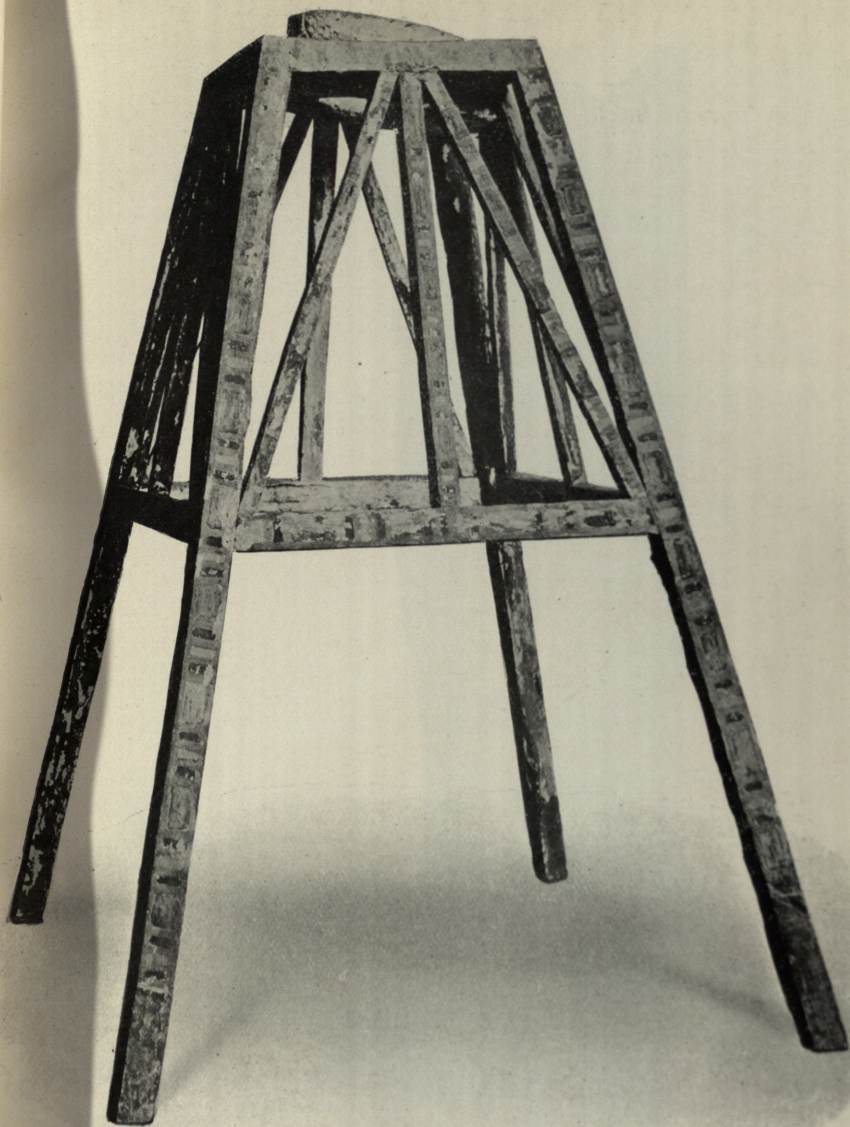


FIG. 2.—STAND of painted Wood. Ancient EGYPTIAN.
(In the British Museum, No. 2470.)



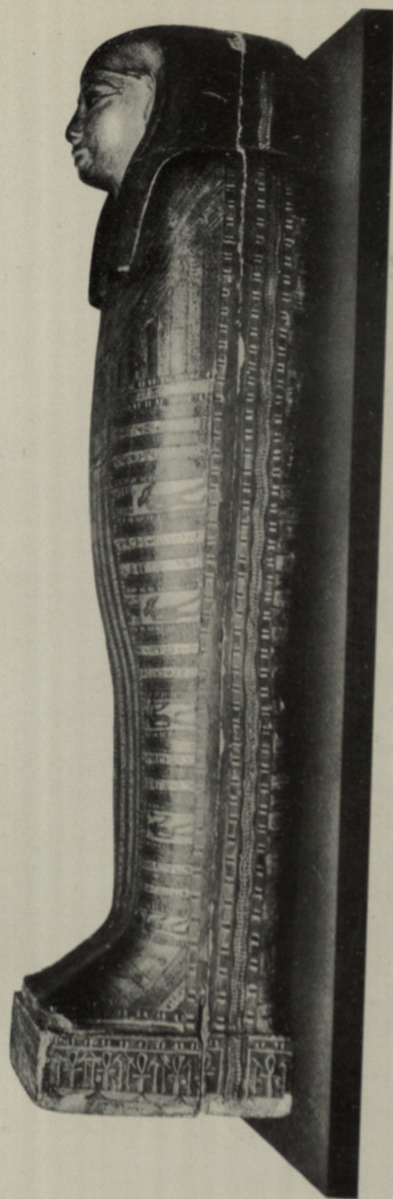


FIG. 3.—PAINTED WOODEN INNER COFFIN, ANCIENT EGYPTIAN (end of xxvth dynasty); about 550 B.C.
(In the Museum, No. 17-1888.)



relief with more or less distinctness. Coffins were then sometimes arranged in sets fitting one over another, as many as three or even four being used for one mummy. The whole was elaborately and sometimes very beautifully painted both inside and out with scenes of all kinds, floral and other decoration, vignettes and passages from the Book of the Dead. In the Museum there are two such inner coffins, which date from the end of the twenty-sixth dynasty, about 550 B.C. One (No. 17—1888), that of An-amen-rai-sennebu, is shown in FIG. 3; the other is very similarly treated but is plain inside.

Under the Ptolemies and the Romans wooden sarcophagi became very common. They were then generally rectangular in plan and made in two parts, the lower one consisting of little



FIG. 4.—HEAD OF THE LOWER PORTION OF A SARCOPHAGUS, of painted wood, EGYPTO-ROMAN; about 200 A.D. (In the Museum, No. 305—1900.)

more than the board on which the mummy rested, supported upon four uprights so that the sarcophagus was raised from six inches to a foot above the ground; the upper part was a vaulted cover, sometimes about eighteen inches high. The planks of which these sarcophagi were made were rarely more than an inch thick and the whole was painted, usually in gaudy colours, with figures of

the gods, the signs of the zodiac and inscriptions in debased hieroglyphics. In the Museum is the lower portion of such a sarcophagus (No. 305—1900, shown in Figs. 4, 5).

The face of the mummy in the Roman period was generally covered by a wood panel, on which a portrait of the deceased was painted in encaustic (*see* Nos. 531—1891 and 1695—1888). There are specimens, usually of no great merit, in many museums. The art of making and decorating wooden coffins gradually deteriorated after the twenty-sixth dynasty and died out not long after the introduction of Christianity and the consequent change in the ideas of resurrection. It is characteristic of the care used at all periods in the making of coffins and sarcophagi that the broad dowels fastening the various parts together were in their turn secured by wooden pegs.

Tablets (*stelæ*) of stone, wood, or faïence, have been found in great numbers inscribed or painted with notices or records of various kinds. The majority are sepulchral and correspond somewhat to the modern tombstone, but are far more elaborate. They were used throughout the whole course of ancient Egyptian history, and in shape were usually rectangular or rounded at the top. In the Museum is such a painted tablet (No. 332—1896), dating from the twenty-second dynasty in which the deceased, Her, chief priest of Amen at Thebes, is represented as making an offering to Ra-Harmachis, the Sun God.

Biers were used, the most general form shown in paintings being that of a lion with a very attenuated body, in fact, no more than the board upon which the mummy rests; the lion's tail is usually raised and curved forward. In the Gizeh Museum there is an example of a bier of the Græco-Roman period with an open-work cover supported on two rows of seated figures, and in the Berlin Museum is another of the same period, but made after an old model. They were frequently represented in sepulchral paintings, as, for instance, on a coffin of the twenty-sixth dynasty in the Museum (No. 17—1888),

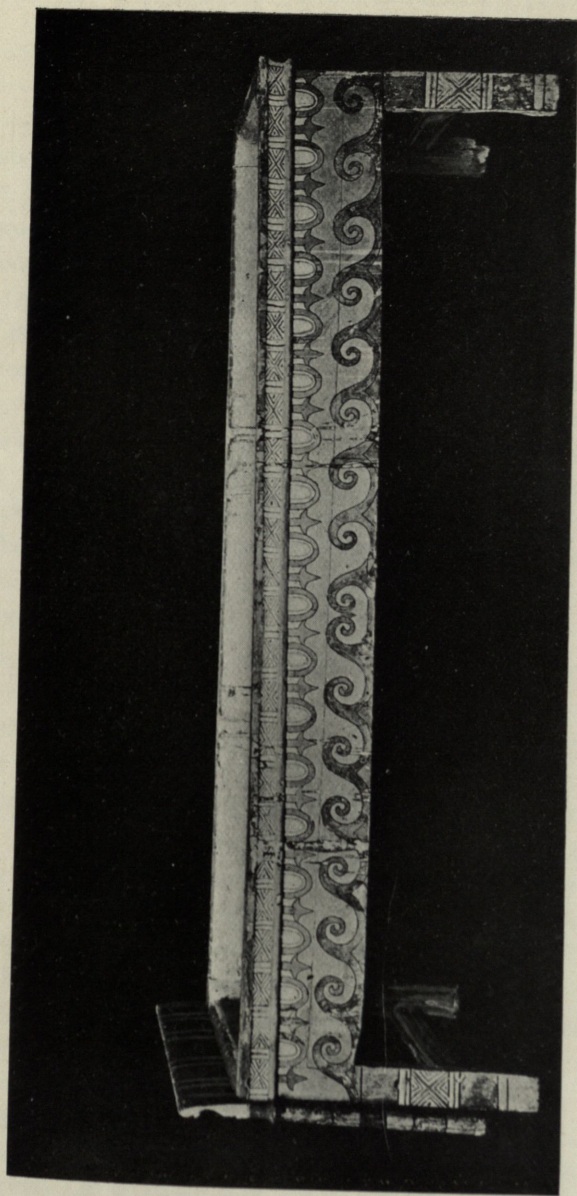


FIG. 5.—LOWER PORTION OF A SARCOPHAGUS OF PAINTED WOOD. EGYPTO ROMAN; ABOUT 200 A.D.
(In the Museum, No. 305-1900.)



and on a piece of a mummy case of the Roman period (No. 1688—1888).

Tombs were generally used as temples, prayers and offerings being made in them before figures of the gods and kings. In the British Museum are fine statues of Seti I.,* Rameses II. and another king of the nineteenth dynasty, carved in cedar. Statues of private persons have also frequently been found, many being of wood. Those dating from the first six dynasties are especially life-like and vigorous in execution. The head, trunk, and legs were usually in one piece, the arms being fastened on by tenons. They represent the ancient Egyptians as of rather slender but muscular build, with great breadth of shoulders. There is a remarkable collection of statues in the Cairo Museum, a notable one being the so-called† Shêkh El Beled, found in a tomb of the fourth or fifth dynasty at Sakkāra (see FIG. 7). Later the figures became very conventionalised.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the life of a virtuous man in the next world would be similar to his earthly existence, but happier. In order, therefore, that the dead might be spared toil, slaves were provided who should answer for the dead when the latter were called on to work. Such slaves were represented by small figures of granite, wood, stone, and in later times faïence, made in the form of mummies, which were placed in the tomb, and were known as *ushabtiu* (answerers or respondents). They are found in great numbers, upwards of 700 having been discovered in the tomb of Seti I. alone. Sometimes they were placed in miniature coffins; they usually carried

* This statue is composed of ten or eleven separate pieces of wood.

† Erman (*Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 30), calls it the statue of an unknown man. A cast of it is in the British Museum.

agricultural implements and were inscribed with the name of the deceased and a short extract from the Book of the Dead in hieroglyphics. There are three of painted wood in the Museum (No. 2202 to 4—1900) of the latter part of the eighteenth dynasty. As the deceased or his spirit (*Ka*) required to be fed, models were placed in the tomb of all kinds of food, including animals, of slaughter-houses, kitchens and granaries, and of servants to prepare the repasts. Models of furniture also and sometimes actual furniture were provided for his use.

The ancient inhabitants of Egypt had more and richer furniture than their successors under Turkish rule. It was at all periods marked by elegance of form; the richest period, however, judging by the mural paintings was under the Theban dynasties. The accompanying woodcut (Fig. 6) gives an idea of a typical throne, carved with figures of cap-

tives. In the British Museum are preserved the remains of a throne believed to be that of Queen Hatshepsu, wife of Thothmes II., a king of the eighteenth dynasty (*see* FIG. 8). It is of a dark wood enriched with carving and thick gilding.

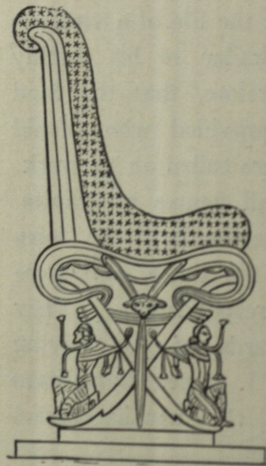


FIG. 6.—EGYPTIAN THRONE.
From a papyrus in the British Museum. (*See* Rossellini, *I Monumenti del Egitto*, Tom. II. No. XCI.).

The earliest form of seat was the stool without a back. The seat was of wood, leather or plaited rushes, and was sometimes covered with a cushion. The legs were frequently square, when they were usually slender and pointed, whilst others were turned and decorated with inlay; often they were in the shape of the fore and hind legs of a lion or other



FIG. 7.—WOODEN STATUE (so-called Shēkh El Beled) found in a tomb of the
14th or 15th dynasty, at Sakkāra. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN.
(In the Cairo Museum.)



animal. This last style was a favourite at all times, and was also used for tables, couches and other similar objects. The legs were generally joined by horizontal rails, with which slender upright and diagonal bars were frequently used, the maximum of strength with lightness being thus obtained. The back when first introduced was usually solid and upright, but was afterwards made more comfortable by being sloped. Folding stools of the type of the Roman "curule" seat, were also made. There are specimens in the British Museum, one with the crossed legs ending in birds' heads holding the bottom rails in their bills (*see* FIG. 9). Workmen's stools have also been found, consisting simply of a flat block of wood on three or four plain legs, usually splayed.

Couches or sofas were generally made in the form of extended seats, with animals' legs (*see* FIG. 10). For use as beds they were thickly covered with cushions. In FIG. 1 is shown the massive leg of a couch or seat of wood in the form of a sphinx; it is without colour decoration. Head rests, apparently designed to keep the sleeper's elaborate head-dress* uninjured, consisted of a block of wood usually hollowed on the upper side and supported on a stem and base, the total height being from six to ten inches. Some had more than one stem, in one example (in the British Museum) as many as twenty-one little columns being used. Similar head-rests were also employed to support the heads of mummies.

Tables appear to have been originally merely stands, sometimes supported on one central leg, and even in late times they were little more than slightly developed

* Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 185. Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* [1851] p. 146, says that similar head-rests are in use now in parts of Egypt.

stands, often with splayed legs and strengthening rails as in chairs (*see* FIG. 2).

Chests, coffers, caskets and boxes of all sizes are found, some pylon-shaped with sides sloping inwards toward the top, where they are crowned with a projecting cornice. Others are of the more usual rectangular shape with or without feet, which if present are generally prolongations of the corner stiles. The lids, sometimes hinged, sometimes loose, are flat or rounded with a peculiar unsymmetrical curvature, or, rarely, gable-shaped. The various portions were dovetailed, mortised or dowed together and fastened with glue and wooden pegs. Boxes for special sepulchral use, such as for *ushabti* figures or canopic jars, and in especial coffins and sarcophagi were decorated with appropriate religious subjects. There is in the Museum a specimen (No. 379—1887) of an interesting type of box from Akhmim, the ancient Panopolis.* A box made of kash or writing-reeds, containing a female wig, was found in a tomb of the eighteenth dynasty at Thebes; it is now in the British Museum.

Among smaller wooden objects, none display more skill in execution and charm in decoration than perfume spoons. Figure subjects and the lotus plant are favourite motives for their ornamentation. The British Museum contains a most interesting collection of these spoons (*see* FIG. 1). Another class of small objects are the palettes used by the scribes, which are usually long rectangular slabs of wood with sunk compartments for the pigments and a central groove, in some cases partly covered by a sliding lid, to hold the reed pens. They generally bear hieroglyphic inscriptions with the name of the owner. There are several examples in the British Museum ranging in date from 1700 B.C. to 100 A.D.

* In Budge, *The Mummy*, p. 217, is described in detail a very similar box in the British Museum.

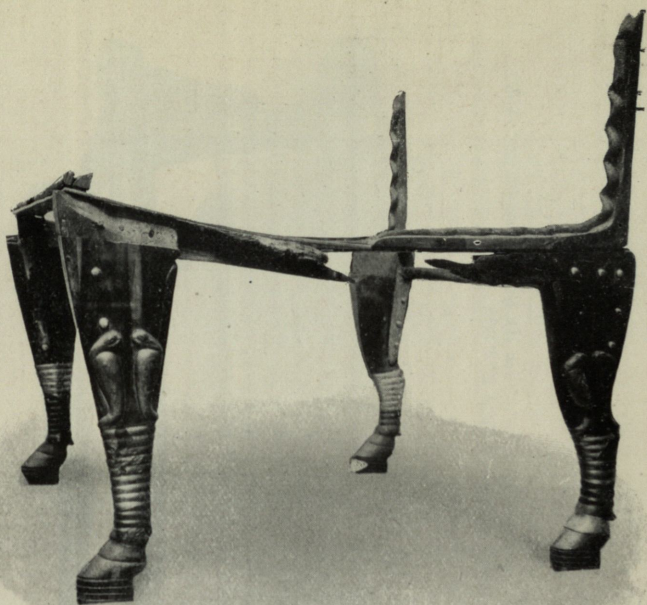


FIG. 8.—THRONE OF "QUEEN HATSHEPSU," of dark wood, enriched with gilding. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN.
(In the British Museum.)



FIG. 9.—FOLDING STOOL of inlaid wood. From Thebes. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN.
(In the British Museum.)



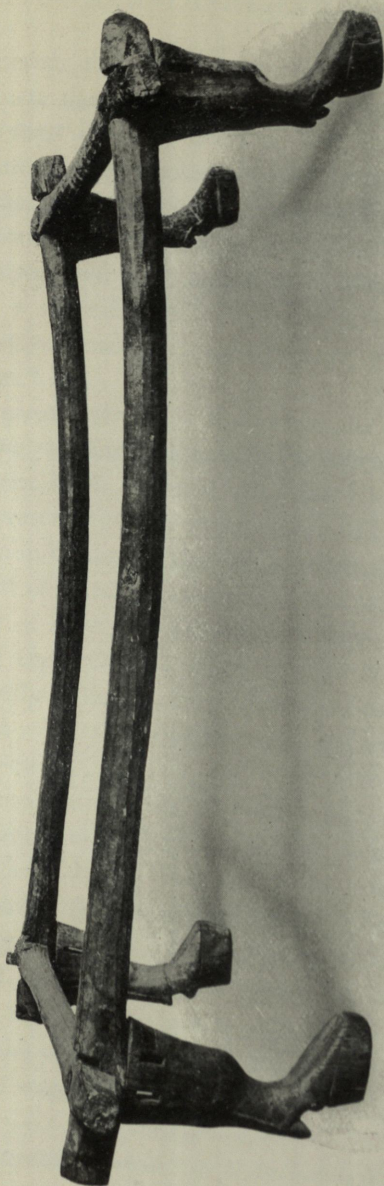


FIG. 10.—WOODEN FRAME OF COUCH. From Thebes, Ancient EGYPTIAN.
(In the British Museum, No. 18196.)



Numerous dolls have been found of various descriptions from mere flat pieces of wood with roughly shaped outline to the most carefully designed and executed figures. They are almost always coloured, and their hair is generally represented by string with little pellets of earthenware attached. Specimens from all periods, including the pre-historic, have been discovered. As instances of other toys may be mentioned a crocodile with movable lower jaw, and a figure of a slave crushing corn, both of which are in Leyden Museum.*

The great highway of Egypt was the Nile, and it is natural, therefore, to find boats, with the characteristically high prow and stern often crowned with the lotus flower, figuring in the representations of processions, and to meet with models of them in tombs.† The boats varied in size from tiny papyrus craft of scarcely any draught and capable of carrying only one, or at most two persons, to ships a hundred feet long. During the "Old Kingdom," when the art of sailing was practically unknown, boats were generally propelled by oars or poles; but subsequently sails were also employed on the larger vessels.

The most usual form of land vehicle was the war chariot, which was also used for the chase; it is supposed to have been introduced towards the end of the "Middle Kingdom." It was so small that three persons could barely stand within it; the body consisted of a floor resting on the axle, and a railing in front and at the sides. Two wheels with four or more spokes, usually six, and a pole fastened to the floor completed the vehicle. Besides this chariot there was a sort of baggage waggon drawn by oxen. Litters also were used by

* Illustrated in Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 164, 165.

† There are some models in the Museum.

men of rank under the "Old Kingdom"; they consisted of a seat with a canopy, and were borne by twelve or more servants.

The principal collections of Egyptian objects are in the British Museum, the Louvre, Berlin Museum, Leyden Museum, and Cairo Museum.

BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.

The country watered by the great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, a large portion of which is a fertile alluvial plain, was from remote antiquity the seat of nations that early reached a high civilisation.

Their furniture, however, is not nearly so fully represented by existing remains as that of the still more ancient Egyptians, for there were no such climatic and other conditions to preserve it. Yet though scarcely a trace of the actual furniture of the Babylonians and their successors, the Assyrians, exists, some-

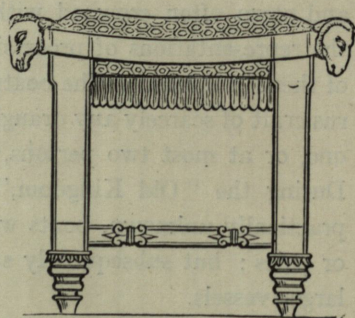


FIG. 11.—ASSYRIAN THRONE; about 880 B.C.
From stone carving in the British Museum.

thing can be learnt from the marvellous sculptured remains of Assyrian art which have been discovered, and are now to be seen in the British and other Museums.

The Assyrians stood to the Babylonians in the same relation in which at a later period the Romans were to the Greeks: in arms they were their conquerors, in arts their pupils. It may safely be concluded that the forms of furniture found in the Assyrian sculptures were also in vogue amongst the Babylonians. The earliest example of the furniture of this



FIG. 12.—STATUE OF GUDEA, a king of Babylon, about 2500 B.C.
(Plaster cast in the British Museum.)



civilisation is the seat or throne of Gudea, a King of Babylon about 2500 B.C.* It appears in a statue of the monarch, shown in Fig. 12; there are no indications to show how the chair was put together.

A period of nearly two thousand years elapses before the next record of furniture is found; it occurs on the sculptures from the Palace of Nimrud, celebrating the victories of King Assur-nasir-pal, about 880 B.C.

The King's throne (see Fig. 11) somewhat resembles that of Gudea. It has no back, is decorated with rams' heads, and has square legs, which are joined by a very elegant rail, and end in moulded tapering feet; it bears a richly-covered cushion with a fringe. A portion of the bronze throne of the same monarch is preserved in the British Museum (see Fig. 14), together with a fragment of a footstool; the former is similar

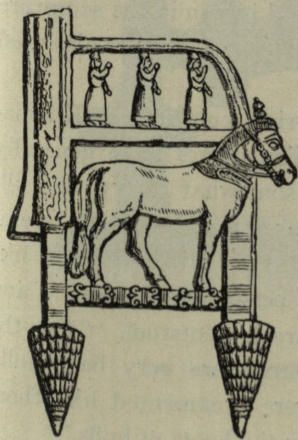


FIG. 13.—ASSYRIAN CHAIR.
From a monument at Khorsabad.

to that on the sculptures just described, except that the feet are like those of a lion. A curious stone tablet (British Museum 91000) of the time of Nabu-palidina, King of Babylonia, about 870 B.C., shows the King seated on a throne carved with two figures, before an altar with plain turned legs, supported on moulded feet and connected by rails; this is probably a type of the table of the time.

"Ornaments in the form of heads of animals, chiefly the lion,† bull

* Ragozin, *Chaldaea*, p. 214, gives the date as somewhere between 4000 and 3000 B.C. The original statue of black basalt is in the Louvre, but there is a cast in the British Museum.

† An example of this in the Museum is an ivory knife-handle (No. 301—1874) in the form of a lion.

and ram, were very generally introduced, even in parts of the chariot, the harness of the horses and domestic furniture." In this respect the Assyrians resembled the Egyptians. "Their tables, thrones and couches were made both of metal and wood, and were probably inlaid with ivory. We learn from Herodotus that those in the temple of Belus in Babylon were of solid gold."

Often the legs ended in the feet of a lion, or the hoofs of a bull, and were made of gold, silver and bronze. "On the monuments of Khorsabad and by the rock tablets of Malthaiyah we find representations of chairs supported by animals and by human figures, sometimes prisoners, like the caryatides of the Greeks (*see* Fig. 13). In this they resembled the arm-chairs of Egypt but appear to have been more massive. This mode of ornamenting the throne of the king was adopted by the Persians, and is seen in the sculpture of Persepolis." The lion's head and lion's foot were also used by other Oriental nations.

The forms of furniture on the Assyrian sculptures at Khorsabad are of an inferior style. "The chairs have generally more than one cross-bar and are somewhat heavy and ill-proportioned, the feet resting on large inverted cones resembling pine-apples" as shown in Fig. 13. All these seats like the *διπποι* and *sellae* of important personages in Greece and Rome were high enough to require a footstool. "On the earlier monuments of Assyria footstools are very beautifully carved or modelled. The feet were ornamented like those of the chair with the feet of lions or the hoofs of bulls."

The tables seem to have been in general of similar form and decoration to the thrones or seats, the ends of the frame projecting and being carved as in the woodcut above (Fig. 11), only on a larger scale. The same method of construction and decoration was followed in the couches, which like the seats

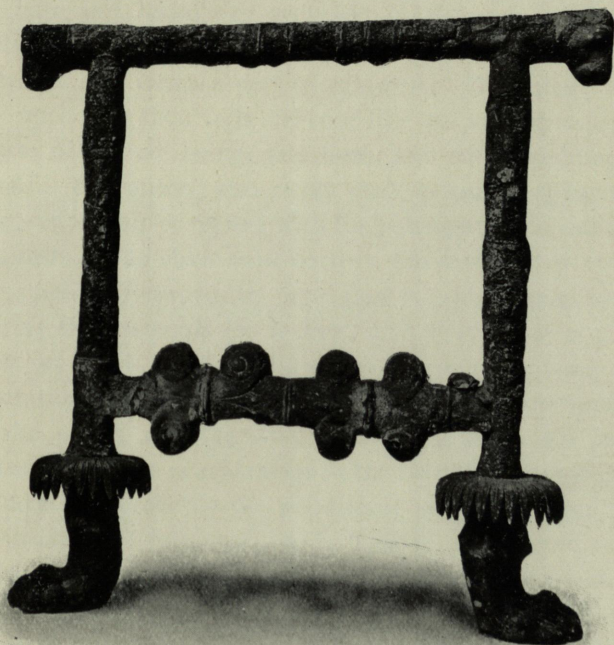


FIG. 14.—SIDE OF BRONZE THRONE. ASSYRIAN.
(In the British Museum, 22491.)



had cushions covered with the richest materials. A most interesting group of examples occurs in a sculptured slab* from Kouyunjik, dating from 668 B.C.; it represents King Assur-bani-pal feasting with his Queen in the garden of his palace. The king wears a rich robe and a crown or coronet; his hair and beard are arranged in elaborate and formal curls and he reclines on a couch, the head of which is curved forwards and forms a sort of arm-rest. The square legs of the couch with their rails and cone-like feet are decorated with figures of human beings and lions, and with mouldings and scrolls. The queen, also richly clad, is seated opposite the king, on a chair or throne with high straight back and curved arm-rests. The chair is so high in the seat that a footstool is required. Between the royal pair is a high stand or table bearing the materials for a feast, and at one side is a lower table on which are the king's sword, bow and quiver. The decoration of these pieces of furniture is of the same character as the couch, and the whole presents a vivid and detailed picture of a scene of relaxation in the royal life of that period.

Cedar was probably the wood most frequently used in the construction of furniture, but in Nineveh as in Egypt and also in Judæa under Solomon and his successors, other woods such as ebony, perhaps rosewood, teak, and Indian walnut were imported from Europe and India. Ebony and ivory were often used for inlaying furniture.

Of the bedroom furniture of Babylonia and Assyria little can be said, nor is it known of what kind were the cabinets or chests made to preserve dresses, trinkets and valuables.

Chariots both for war and the chase appear to have been very similar to those used by the Egyptians [*see* p. 23], but the wheels have generally eight and sometimes twelve spokes. On the bronze gates of Shalmanezzer II. (859 to 824 B.C.),

* In the British Museum.

in the British Museum, is a four-wheeled car and on a stone carving in the same Museum is a trolley also on four wheels.

JUDÆA.

Only a few scattered details can be given respecting ancient Hebrew furniture. In Judæa, as in other eastern lands, it is, and no doubt always has been, simpler than in the west, as so much of daily life is spent in the open air. Beds made of wood inlaid with ivory and gold are mentioned as early as the thirteenth century, B.C., and the prophet Amos (ninth century) censures the rich for using such beds. Ordinary beds, if used at all, were merely couches. In the figurative language of the Canticles the bed of Solomon is of cedar of Lebanon, the pillars of silver and the bottom of gold. According to II Kings, iv., 10., the furniture of a bedroom for an honoured guest consisted of a bed, a chair, a table, and a lamp; this was for the prophet Elisha early in the ninth century. The bed of Og, King of Bashan, was nine cubits long by four wide and was of iron.

Ivory wardrobes are mentioned in Psalm xlv., but of what size or form cannot be determined. In the Book of Esther (fifth century) allusions are made to Persian furniture decoration.

"White, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple, to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver." *Chap. i., 6.*

On the throne of King Solomon (about 1,000 B.C.) lions were attached to the arms, probably in the same position as the horses on the Khorsabad chair (*see Fig. 13*); lions of gold or chryselephantine work stood six on each side of the steps before the throne. Of the ordinary chairs of the ancient Jews nothing is known, and their tables are conjectured to have been metal or leather trays on low stands. In early times they

seem to have sat at meals ; later on the custom of reclining was introduced, probably owing to Roman influence.

The Talmud was compiled between the fifth and third centuries, B.C., and from that source it appears that it was usual to have two tables in the dining-room ; one was a dining-table of wood with three legs and square base and probably square top, the latter sometimes of marble ; the other was a side-table with three carved legs. Chairs had sometimes a square frame without arms or back, in some cases three legs with seats of wood or leather. Another form of chair called "katedrah" resembled the Roman "cathedra." (see p. 43). Benches, litters, sedan-chairs and couches for three persons like "triclinia" (see p. 44) are also mentioned. Bedsteads had occasionally four posts, and were so high that footstools were necessary in order to get into them. Reference is also made to chests made of wood with glass or horn decoration ; some had lids, while some opened at the side and were fitted with shelves or drawers.

The furniture of the Tabernacle used by the Israelites in the wilderness consisted of the Ark of the Covenant, an Altar of burnt-offering and another of incense, the Table of Shewbread and the golden candlestick.* The four first were made of shittim wood (a kind of acacia), a hard and durable wood with a beautiful grain, which was overlaid with gold or brass. How they were decorated does not appear except that each had "a crown of gold." The boards of which the Tabernacle was made were also of shittim wood. The ornamentation of the golden candlestick was founded on the almond flower.

The "golden candlestick" from the Temple, which was carried away by Titus, at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., is shown in Fig. 15 ; it is from a carving on the Arch

* Exodus xxv., xxxvi., xxxvii.

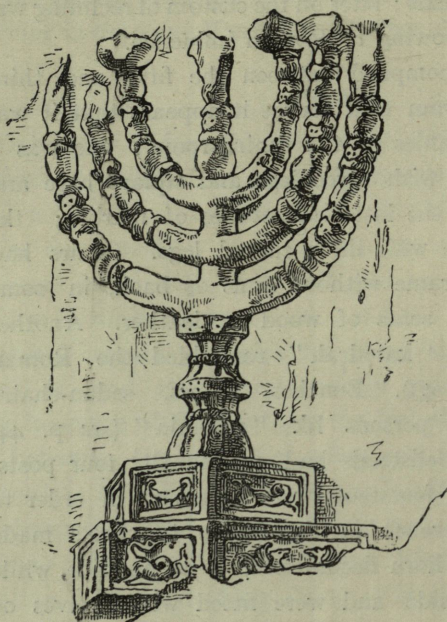


FIG. 15.—THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

(From a carving on the Arch of Titus at Rome.)

of Titus at Rome. In the same carving is shown the Table of Shewbread, about twelve inches high, with four straight legs joined by rails.

The chariots of Solomon were made in Egypt, and the artists employed on the Temple came from Tyre, so it is not unreasonable to conjecture that the furniture of the Hebrews was made by foreign workmen, or that the Hebrews themselves borrowed freely the forms and

modes of decoration of surrounding nations, such as the Egyptians and Assyrians. The art of Judæa, such as it was, appears to have been a native Syrian style, influenced mainly by Mesopotamia, but also in some degree by Egypt.

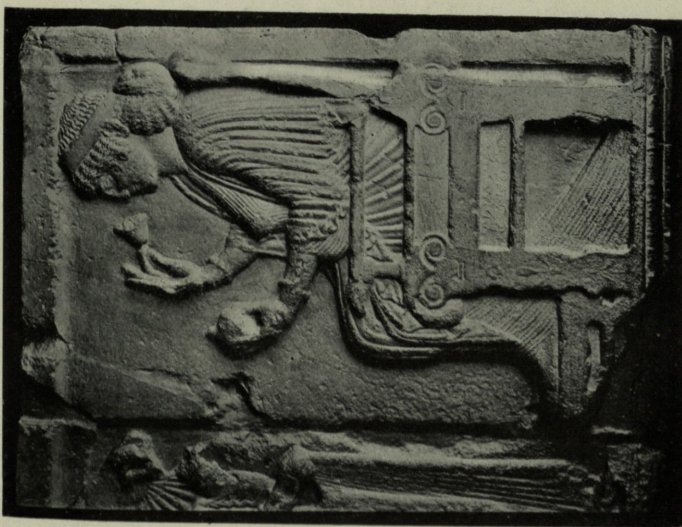


FIG. 16.—PORTION OF "HARPY" TOMB, FROM XANTHOS.
ASIATIC GREEK; about 550 B.C.
(In the British Museum.)

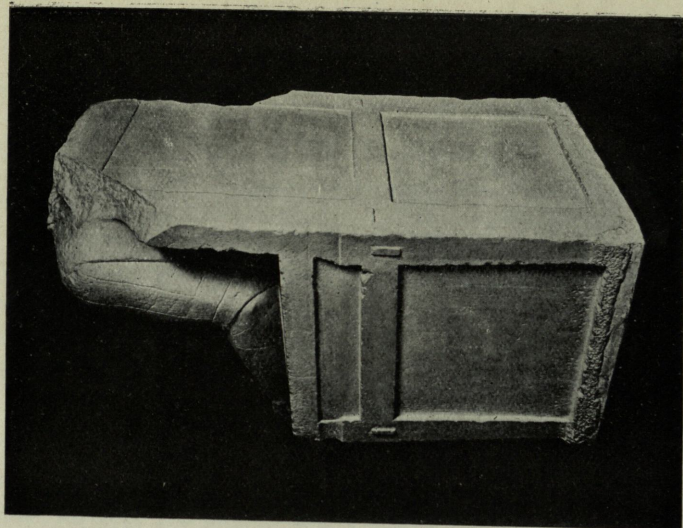


FIG. 17.—STATUE OF CHARES. GREEK; 6th century B.C.
(In the British Museum.)

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CHAPTER III.

GREECE ; ROME ; BYZANTIUM.

The Greeks of the early ages, in common with the Egyptians and other semi-civilised peoples, believed in a future life resembling their earthly existence, and accordingly placed in the tombs of their dead various objects of daily use. Among these have been found an abundance of the celebrated painted vases ; it is from these and from reliefs in marble and terra-cotta that our knowledge of Greek furniture chiefly comes, for very few indeed, if any, actual examples exist.

"Greek houses were probably very bare of furniture according to our notions. Beyond beds and couches, chairs, stools, foot-stools and small portable tables, they do not seem to have had anything that we should call furniture—except chests."*

In any attempt to picture to ourselves the furniture and utensils of the early Greeks, apart from chariots, arms, and such like, it will be necessary to bear in mind the close connection which that people must have had with the Asiatic races and the splendour and refinement that surrounded the wealthy civilisation of the oriental monarchies. The Greeks were so continually the allies or the rivals of the various states in Asia Minor, and pushed out into that fertile region so many vigorous colonies, that it cannot be doubted that the splendid stuffs, beds, couches, thrones, chariots and other objects used by Greeks on the Asiatic continent or in Europe had much of eastern character in form and method of execution and perhaps at first in decoration also. In Fig. 16 is represented a chair of Assyrian character on the "Harpy" tomb from Xanthos, in the British Museum.

* Whibley, *Companion to Greek Studies*, p. 357.

Amongst the oldest remaining models of Greek furniture are the chairs in which the antique figures in the Syrian room in the British Museum are seated. These date from nearly six centuries before Christ. They represent chairs with backs, quite perpendicular in front and behind. The frame pieces of the seats are mortised into the legs, and the mortices and tenons are accurately marked in the marble, the horizontal bars passing right through the upright ones (see Fig. 17). These early pieces of furniture were probably executed in wood; metal was at first but rarely used.

At a later period the following varieties of seats were used. The *δίφρος* was a small stool without back, provided with four legs, which were either crossed * or upright (see Fig. 18).

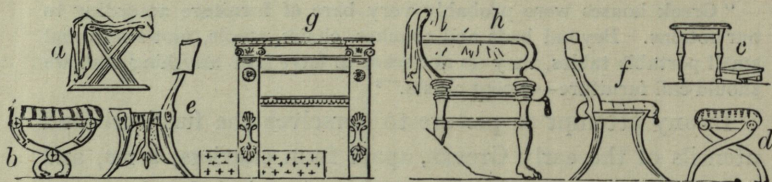


FIG. 18.—GREEK SEATS.—*a* to *d*, *Diphroi*; *e*, *f*, *Klismoi*; *g*, *h*, *Thronoi*.
From the Parthenon frieze and other sources.



FIG. 19.—GREEK THRONES.
From carvings in the British Museum and elsewhere.

* This form was not unknown earlier, as may be seen from a painting on an amphora of the middle of the sixth century, in which is a folding stool with legs of pronounced animal shape.

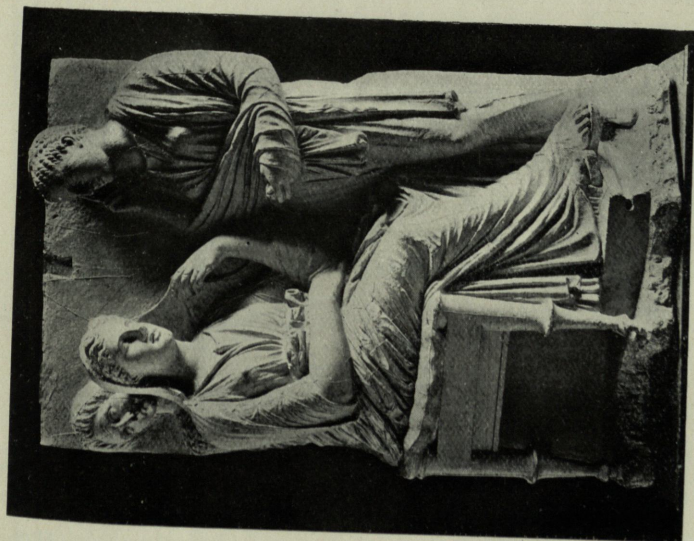


FIG. 20.—SEPULCHRAL RELIEF (*stèle*) showing a seat. ATTIC GREEK; late 5th or early 4th century B.C.
(In the Leyden Museum.)

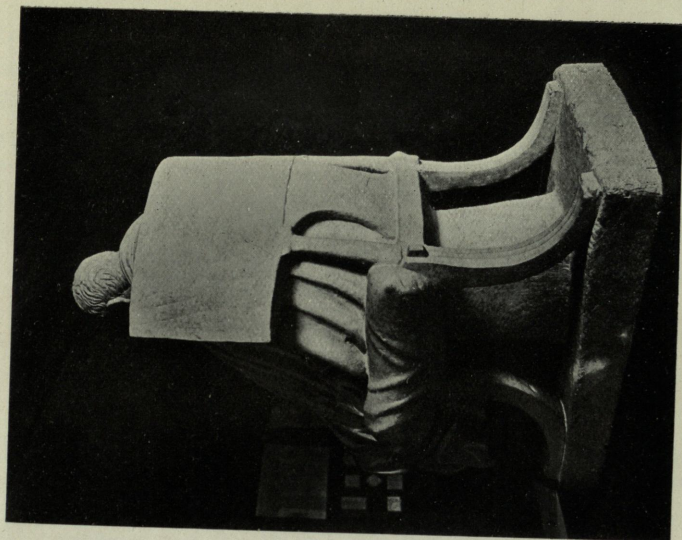


FIG. 21.—STATUE OF POSEIDIPPOS, Comedy Writer. First half of 3rd century B.C.
(In the Vatican.)



Stools with crossed legs and webbed seats could be folded and carried about like camp stools. The other form (*see* Figs. 18 and 19) is shown in the Parthenon frieze, from which an example is given.

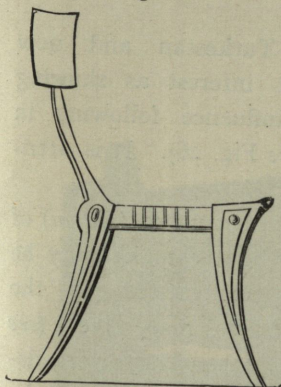


FIG. 22.—GREEK CHAIR (Klismos).

The second kind of seat, called κλισμός, has a back generally consisting of a deep, concave rail resting on two side supports, and four legs, the front pair curved forwards and the others backwards (*see* Figs. 21 and 22). This chair combines comfort with elegance in a high degree, and is familiar from the chairs of the "Empire" period of the early nineteenth century, which were founded on this model.

A third more solid and imposing style, called θρόνος, had an upright back usually of considerable height, and low arms. They were used in temples for the seats of the gods, and in public and private life for distinguished people. Those placed in the temples and in the courts and chief places of theatres for magistrates and leaders of the people, were of carved marble;* in private houses they were generally of a fine and heavy wood. The flat surfaces of the back, the sides, bars and legs

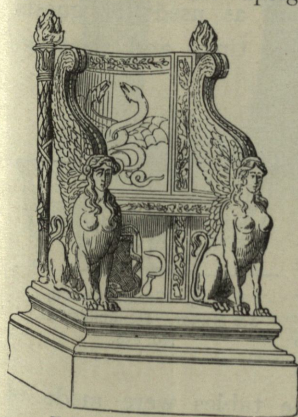


FIG. 23.—GREEK THRONE.
Of marble, in the Louvre.

* In the British Museum is a cast of such a throne for the priest of Dionysos Eleuthereos in the theatre of Dionysos at Athens.

afforded good opportunities for ornamentation (see Fig. 23 and also 18, where is a specimen of a throne without a back). Often they were so high in the seat as to necessitate the use of footstools (see Figs. 18, 19, 20).

A chair discovered in Chinese Turkestan and now in the British Museum is of great interest as showing the far-reaching extent of Greek influence following in the train of Alexander's conquests (see Fig. 26). It is attributed to the middle of the third century A.D.

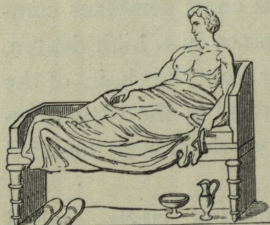


FIG. 24.—GREEK COUCH.
See Panofka. *Bilder antiken Lebens*, Taf. VII., 2.

The beds and couches (*κλῖναι*) of heavier or of lighter make may be regarded as elongations of the *thronos* and *diphros* respectively (see Figs. 24, 25, 27). They were decorated in much the same style, and the lighter kind like the *diphros* could also be folded. They are mentioned as used for guests both for meal times and sleeping.

On a painted vase one is shown in the shape of an animal with an elongated body.* Footstools were sometimes used with them (see Fig. 27.)

Tables were chiefly used by the Greeks for meals, and were generally small and lower than modern tables, as they were intended for men† reclining on couches. Many of the tables were made of



FIG. 25.—GREEK COUCH.
See Müller. *Denkmäler*, II. No. 858.

* Millingen, *Peintures de vases grecs*, Pl. IX.

† The women of all ancient nations appear to have sat at meals.

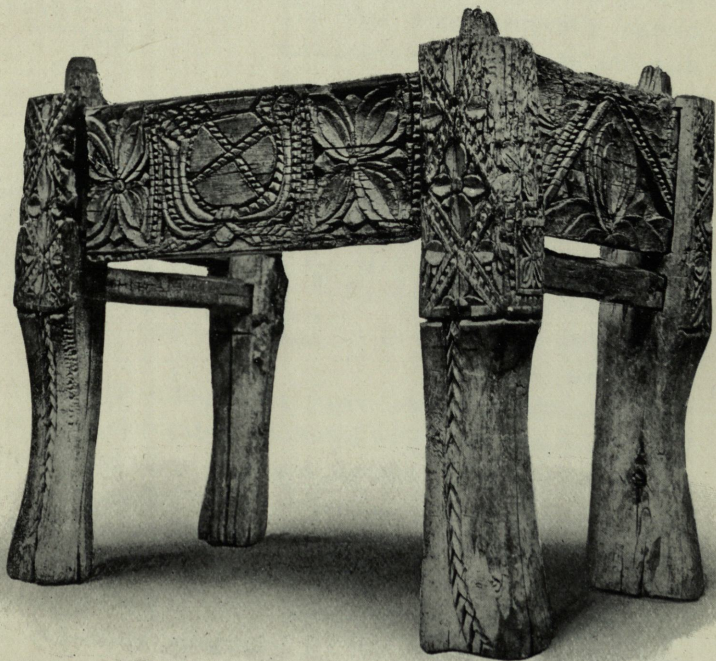


FIG. 26.—CHAIR of carved wood from sand-buried residence in ancient site beyond Niya in Chinese Turkestan. Middle of 3rd century A.D.
(Found by Dr. M. A. Stein in 1901, and now in the British Museum.)





FIG. 27.—GREEK COUCH.
See Lenormant and De Witte.
Monum. céramogr. II., pl.
XXXIII. a.

metal and were more of the nature of stands. They were supported on four or three legs and sometimes on a single stem with three feet. Those with four legs, were generally square, the others were round or oval. The legs were frequently carved with animals' heads above and with their feet below (see Fig. 28).

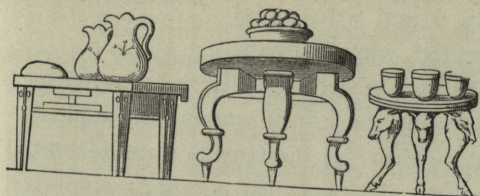


FIG. 28.—GREEK TABLES.
From Vase-Paintings.

Large and solid chests and presses (*λάρνακες*) were commonly used for storing clothes and household linen, and smaller boxes were em-

ployed for toilet requisites, papers and other articles. They were often elaborately decorated with floral ornament, figure subjects and other devices, sometimes, as in the case of the chest of Cypselos,* with mythological and legendary scenes.

Wood was largely used for statues, which in early times chiefly represented the gods, but later distinguished men also. Mention is made of oak, cedar, cypress, sycamore, pine, fig, box and ebony being used for this purpose. Daedala was the name used for early works of art ascribed to the time of Daedalus, and especially ancient wooden statues of gods ornamented with gilding, bright colours and real drapery. Statues called *ἀκρόλιθοι*, made of wood, gilt or covered with drapery, the face and extremities being carved in marble, were made from early times till as late as Praxiteles (first half of the fourth century B.C.).

* Described by Pausanias.

Owing to the mountainous nature of Greece, locomotion was chiefly conducted on foot or on horseback, but chariots for war and racing, and also larger carriages were used. The former had two wheels usually made with four strong spokes (see Fig. 29), a pole firmly fixed in the axle, and the body, open at the back, and provided with a massive rim. The free end of the pole and the extremities of the axle were usually bound with metal and frequently decorated with animals' heads. Carriages with four wheels and litters borne by men or animals were mostly for the use of women and children.

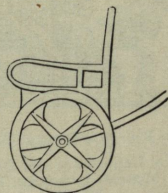


FIG. 29.—GREEK WAR CHARIOT.

See Gerhard, *Auserles. Vasenbilder*, Taf. ccliv.

The woodwork and furniture of the Greeks were decorated with characteristic beauty and taste, the methods employed being painting, carving, turning, and inlaying and incrusting with metals, ivory and other precious substances; these forms of ornamentation were sometimes used separately, and sometimes together. In the earlier and purer periods of Greek history, when the private life of the citizen was very simple, the decoration was confined chiefly to temples and public buildings, but in later times great luxury became general.

ROME.

The splendour that surrounded the personal usages of the earlier races of antiquity, the Egyptians, the Ninevites, the Persians, Greeks and Tuscans, was inherited by the Romans. Not only did they outlive these powers, but they absorbed their territory as far as they could reach; they affected to adopt their religions and deities by adding them to their own system, and welcomed every art that could minister to the

magnificence and luxury of their own private life. They have left both written records and actual examples of their furniture, made of metal or marble. The discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii has given us not only single pieces of furniture, but very considerable remains of houses, shops, streets, public places of assembly, theatres and baths. It is in such evidences of Roman social life that the materials for the present inquiry are to be found.

In the early period of their history the Romans were involved in unceasing struggles, first for independence and then for dominion, and so long as the older powers of Italy survived to dispute the growth of Roman greatness, there could not be much expansion of private wealth or splendour in the houses of the citizens. Though surrounded by the luxury of other nations, the Roman people long remained exceptionally simple in personal habits. It was during the Punic wars, which ended 146 B.C., that oriental magnificence found its way into Italy with the Carthaginian armies.

The Roman house consisted generally of two or more square enclosures, surrounded by arcades and open to the air in the centre; the openings could be closed by awnings, when the courts were not large enough to include a garden. The chief of these enclosures were the *atrium* or hall nearest to the street, and further in the house, the *peristylum*, which was the principal living apartment. From these branched off the bedrooms, dining-rooms, and other apartments.

Roman rooms were usually paved with marble in large slabs or in mosaic work made of small dies or squares, flooring of wood being seldom used. The engraving (Fig. 30), a reconstruction of the house of Pansa, gives a fair idea of the general character of a richly appointed Roman house.

The ornamental woodwork in some of these rooms was often rich in the extreme. The outer vestibule was protected by

the projecting rafters of the roof or by an overhanging balcony, according as the house was of one or more storeys. It was in some instances enclosed by carved or trellised woodwork. Folding-doors were generally used, and could be fastened with locks, which in the age of the Empire were thoroughly understood. Latches fixed by pins, or wooden bars were sometimes used to secure the doors. The hinges (*cardines*) were pegs at the top and bottom of the door turning in sockets. Metal hinges of modern type, strapped over the wooden frame, were, however, not unknown, and Roman

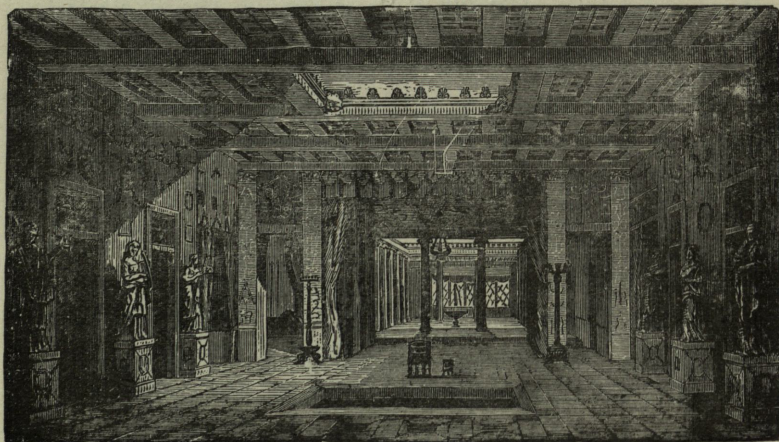


FIG. 30.—ATRIUM of the house of Pansa, in Pompeii (restored).

bronze hinges may be seen in the collections of the British Museum. The decoration of the doors consisted principally of bronze mounts; the front door (*janua*) and its frame were especially richly decorated. The door-posts were ornamented with carving and were at times inlaid with tortoiseshell and other rich materials. The inner rooms frequently had curtains in the place of doors.

The ceilings of Roman rooms were also the subject of much

ornamentation. In the simplest constructions the wood joists of the floor above or the beams of the roof, as the case might be, were shown and generally painted. In richer houses the timbers were covered with boards and formed into coffers and panels called *abaci* or *lacunae*, which were painted, gilt and inlaid with mosaics; this splendid system of decoration dates from the destruction of Carthage (B.C. 146). Curved bearers from the upper part of the walls were, sometimes, added to form a kind of ceiling with "barrel" vaults, called *camarae*, for the construction of which Vitruvius gives directions.

The Romans used tables with one, three, or four legs and rectangular, round, or oblong tops, and stands generally with three legs (*tripodes*); these were made in many varieties and of many materials, such as wood, ivory, marble, gold, silver, or bronze; they were often enriched with carving, inlaying, engraving, damascening, and other processes. Favourite woods were cedar and maple (especially the bird's eye variety), *citrus* and *cedrus atlantica*, the portions with waved or knotted grain from the roots and boles of pollarded trees being most in request. Descriptive names were given to woods peculiarly grained, as *tigrinus* (of tiger pattern) when the grain ran in stripes, *pantherinus* when with large spots, and *apiatus* when thickly covered with small spots like a swarm of bees. But colour was held in the highest esteem, that of wine mixed with honey being the most prized. Tables made of such

woods were exceedingly costly. Those used for meals were low, as it was the custom to recline on couches; Fig. 31 shows the usual position of these couches (*triclinia*).

A very beautiful tripod, found at Pompeii and now preserved at

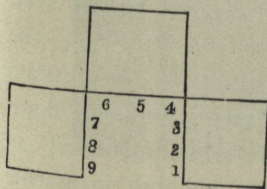


FIG. 31.—PLAN OF COUCHES (*triclinia*) at a Roman banquet.

Naples, is shown in Fig. 32. The supports of such tables were in many styles, including terminal and other figures, winged sphinxes, leopards' or lions' legs (see Fig. 33), columns, and other architectonic forms. Some were massive, and others, light and movable, were made to contract, the stays that connect the legs being arranged to slip up or down by means of loops (see Fig. 34). Tripod stands used as altars seem to have been higher (see Fig. 35). A particular form of stand called *incitega* generally with four or more legs was made to hold *amphorae* and other vessels with rounded or pointed bases. These were used also in Greece and Egypt (see Fig. 2, where an Egyptian specimen is shown). Candelabra

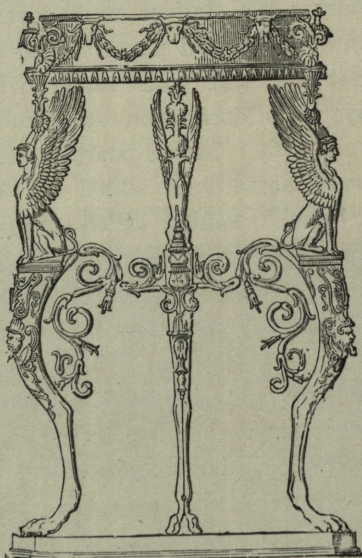


FIG. 32.—BRONZE TRIPOD.
Ancient ROMAN. Found at Herculaneum,
now in Naples Museum. (Reproduction
in the Museum,
No. 1370-7.)

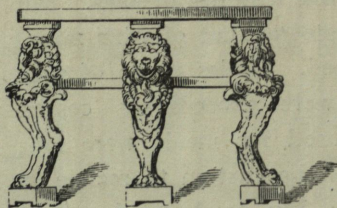


FIG. 33.—MARBLE TABLE.
Ancient ROMAN. Found at Pompeii,
now in Naples Museum.

of graceful form and proportions were also found in the reception rooms; more than a dozen examples may be seen in the British Museum; the woodcut (Fig. 36) represents metal examples found in Pompeii, and now preserved in Naples. Candelabra in marble

have also been found, as much as six, eight, ten, or

more feet in height, of hybrid composition, including capitals of columns, altar bases, acanthus leaf, and other ornament (*see* Casts Nos. 93, 94 (Ant.) in the Museum).

The most noted chair of the Romans was the curule (*sella curulis*), used by the higher magistrates and great officers of state; it was a mark of the dignity of their office and formed also one of the ceremonial objects presented to foreign rulers, whose friendship the Romans wished to cultivate. It had a square seat, without back or arms, supported on curved legs, the front

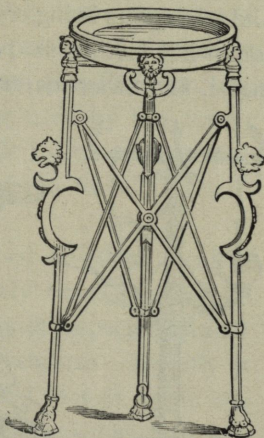


FIG. 34.—BRONZE STAND.
Ancient Roman. In the
British Museum.



FIG. 35.—TERRA-COTTA PLAQUE from a Frieze.
Found at Frascati (Tusculum). GRÆCO-ROMAN; about 1st century B.C.
(In the Louvre.)

and back pairs being crossed (see Fig. 18, where Greek seats of somewhat similar shape are given); it was made of wood, metal, and other materials and richly decorated. This form

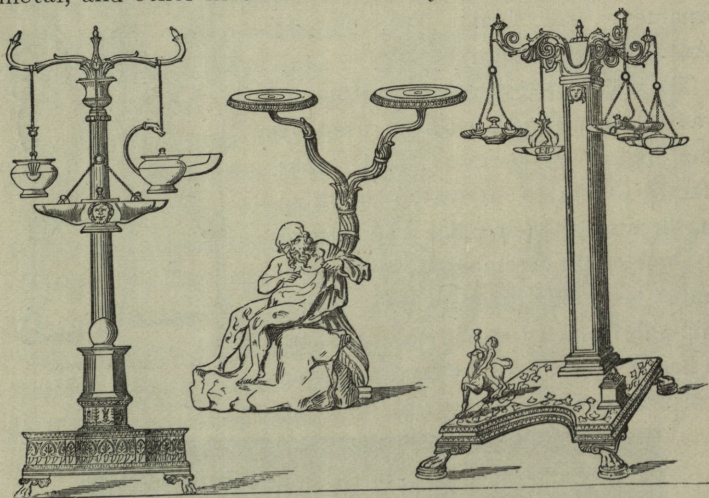


FIG. 36.—BRONZE CANDELABRA.
Ancient ROMAN Found at Pompeii, now in Naples Museum.

of seat appears to have been of great antiquity; on an early *antefixa* of Volscian work are shown three such seats. The *sella castrensis* was a similar stool with straight legs, for use in camps.

The *bisellium* was also a seat of honour which, as its name implies, was wide enough for two. Its form is clearly exhibited in the illustration (Fig. 37). The *thronus* or *solium* corresponds in make, decoration and use to the Greek *thronos*, already described. These chairs were frequently so high as to require footstools (*scabella*),

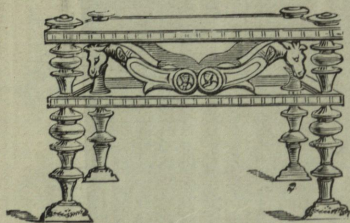


FIG. 37.—BRONZE SEAT (*bisellium*).
Ancient ROMAN. Found at Pompeii,
now in Naples Museum.
(In the Museum is a reproduction
No. '70—10.)

which were also required for getting into some beds. Another form of chair called *cathedra* resembled the Greek *klismos*, and was chiefly used by women (see Figs. 21, 22). The *scamnum* was the bench, which as used by the poorer classes was of wood and plainly made ; but very ornate specimens in marble and bronze have been found in baths and other public resorts.

Lectus was the general term for a bed or couch, and of these there were various kinds. In early times the Roman bed was probably like the Greek ; but later, especially under the Empire, it became exceedingly luxurious. Usually it was made to be entered at one side called *sponda*, while the other side was occupied by a board (*pluteus*), but this was not always present. There was invariably a head-board and in some cases a footboard. The later Roman type was high and was entered by means of a step. The decoration consisted of carving, veneering, gilding or even plating with gold and other precious metals. At the head was a pillow-rest, the

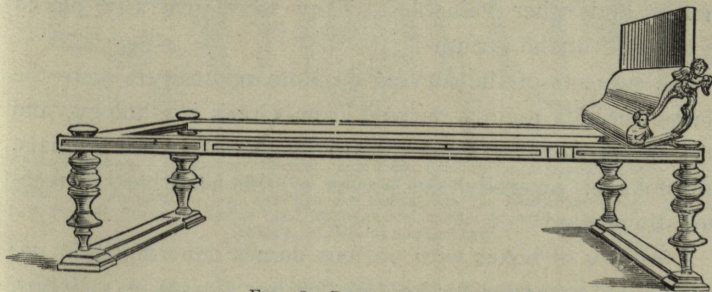


FIG. 38.—BRONZE COUCH.

ANCIENT ROMAN. Found at Pompeii, now in Naples Museum.

(In the Museum is a reproduction, No. '70—14.)

ends of which (*fulcra*) were usually ornamented with bronze. Some very fine bedsteads were found at Pompeii (see Fig. 38). The marriage bed (*lectus genialis*) was a kind of state bed higher than ordinary, and it stood in the atrium. The couch used

at meals (*lectus tricliniaris*) was lower and simpler than the bed, having only a ledge at the head for the support of the left arm. In the time of the Emperors couches called *accubita* took the place of the foregoing; they were still lower, but were furnished more luxuriously. For writing, reading or meditation a couch (*lectus lucubratorius*) was used, smaller than the bed and simpler in form. The bier (*lectus funebris*) was shaped like a litter without a hood, and carried in the same way. It was generally highly ornamented, and when in use in the house was placed in the atrium with the foot towards the door. Cradles (*cunae*) were in common use among the Romans.

Sideboards or tables (*abaci*) were used for the display of gold and silver cups and such like. Their tops were sometimes of silver, but more usually of marble; in some cases they seem to have had partitions beneath, in which also plate was placed. Cupboards (*armaria*), originally designed to hold arms, were afterwards used for storing clothes, books, money and other valuables. They were generally placed in the wall of the atrium

The subjects of the carving on Roman furniture were the classic legends mainly derived from Greek mythology, and also masks, heads of heroes, heads, legs and feet of animals, and foliage, generally the leaves of the acanthus, conventionally treated.

A variety of boxes with various names denoting their use are known, as *acerra* for holding incense; *capsa* or *scrinium*, cylindrical in shape and made of beech, for books, then made in the form of rolls; *dactyliotheca* for keeping rings and jewels; *pyxis*, also a jewel-case, derives its name from the ancient term for boxwood, of which substance probably it was at first made, though gold, silver, ivory and other precious substances were afterwards employed; *fritilla*,

a dice-box, of cylindrical form with ringed indentations, like those in present use; and *cista* in which sacred objects were carried in religious processions. Combs of boxwood were introduced from Greece, and ivory combs were subsequently imported from Egypt.

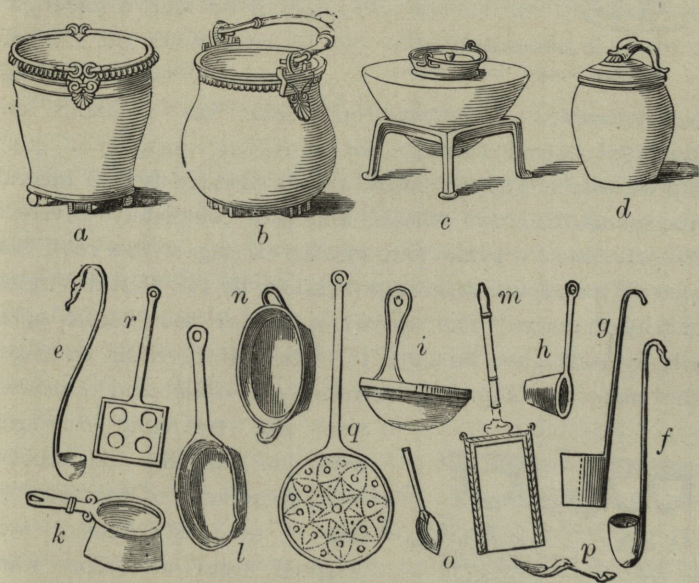


FIG. 39.—BRONZE KITCHEN UTENSILS.

ANCIENT ROMAN. In Naples Museum. *a, b*, Pails. *c*, Kettle on a tripod (*tripies*). *d*, Pot (*olla*) for cooking. *e, f, g*, Ladles (*trua, trulla*) for drawing wine. *h, i*, Ladles for drawing water. *k*, Saucepan. *l*, Pan (*sartago*) for heating oil. *m*, Shovel or Scoop. *n*, Pan. *o, p*, Spoons (*cochlear, ligula*) used for eggs and snails, as well as liquids. *q*, Sieve (*colum*). *r*, Pan for cooking eggs.

In Fig. 39 are given illustrations of various cooking utensils found in Pompeii, and now preserved in the Royal Museum, Naples. As will be seen, they combine beauty with usefulness in a high degree.

The use of carriages depends largely on the condition of roads, and the Romans were famous roadmakers. As might be expected, therefore, they used carriages freely.

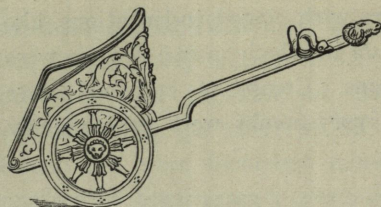


FIG. 40.—CHARIOT (*biga*).
Ancient ROMAN. In the Vatican.

The *currus* was a war-chariot, almost exactly like the Greek (see p. 36); if drawn by two horses it was called a *biga* (see Fig. 40), if by four, a *quadriga*. In later times the chariot was chiefly used in racing

and triumphs. The *tensa* or *thensa* was a highly ornamented sacred carriage for conveying images of gods in procession. The *carpentum*, a State carriage used in funeral processions, had two wheels, and was completely covered. The *pilentum*, a splendid four-wheeled carriage with a roof, but open all round, was used in processions by the Vestal Virgins and by matrons. The *covinus*, a British war-chariot open only in front, gave its name to a Roman travelling carriage. The *rheda* (see Fig. 41), *carruca*, *petorritum* and *essedum*,

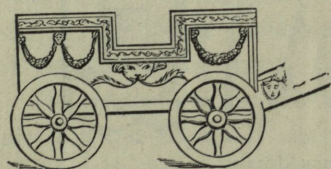


FIG. 41.—CARRIAGE (*rheda*).
Ancient ROMAN

were also travelling carriages with four wheels, the second being frequently of considerable size; the last named was adapted from a Celtic war-chariot of massive construction, open in front and with a particularly wide pole. The *cisium*

was a light open carriage or gig, without cover, for quick travelling. The *benna* had a basket-work body on four wheels. The *plaustrum* and *sarracum*, carts or wagons, consisted of a table of planks and a pole, which rested on the axles of the solid wheels, of which there were sometimes two and sometimes four.

Litters (*lectica*) were extensively used. They resembled four-post bedsteads with an arched roof of leather, and were

fitted with curtains on all sides; they were carried by means of two detachable poles. The posts were usually of turned work, while the rails and boards were carved. The *basterna* differed from the *lectica* only in being carried by mules instead of men, and was therefore probably more solid. The *sella gestatoria* was a species of sedan-chair, but appears not to have been completely covered in; it was sometimes made of plain or ornamented leather.

The great achievement of the Romans in woodwork of a constructive kind was the machinery contrived for public shows, such as the cages used for raising the wild beasts into the arena, the sides of which fell down, thus setting free the animals required for the sports. Seneca speaks of machines used in theatres for widening or narrowing, raising or lowering the stage noiselessly.* In the early days theatres were built of wood, stone theatres not being introduced till nearly the end of the Republic. The magnificent wooden theatre built by M. Cæcilius Scaurus, Aedile in B.C. 58, could hold 80,000 spectators. Probably nothing in the Middle Ages, when timber abounded and its use was thoroughly understood, surpassed the device of C. Curio, in Africa, when celebrating the funeral games in honour of his father. He erected close together two large wooden theatres, each nicely poised on a pivot. They were first placed back to back, and then at a given moment were suddenly swung round to face each other, so that on the removal of the inner frames an amphitheatre was formed.†

The following are some of the woods used by the Romans. For carpentry and joiners' work, cedar was most in demand, particularly that from Crete, Africa, and Syria; images of

* Epistle 88, "pegmata per se surgentia . . . et tabulata tacite in sublime crescentia."

† Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXVI., Chap. XV.

the gods were also made of this wood, and in some cases of cypress. Pine of different kinds was used for doors, panels, carriage-building, ships, shingles for roofs, and all work that required joining up with glue, for which that wood is particularly suitable. Elm was employed for the framework of doors and for the sills, in which were the sockets for the pins or hinges on which the doors turned; the hinge-jambs were occasionally made of olive. Ash served for many purposes; that grown in Gaul was used for certain parts of carriages on account of its suppleness and pliancy; the axles and portions much mortised together were made of holm oak. Beech was also in frequent use. Osiers were used for wicker-chairs as at the present day.

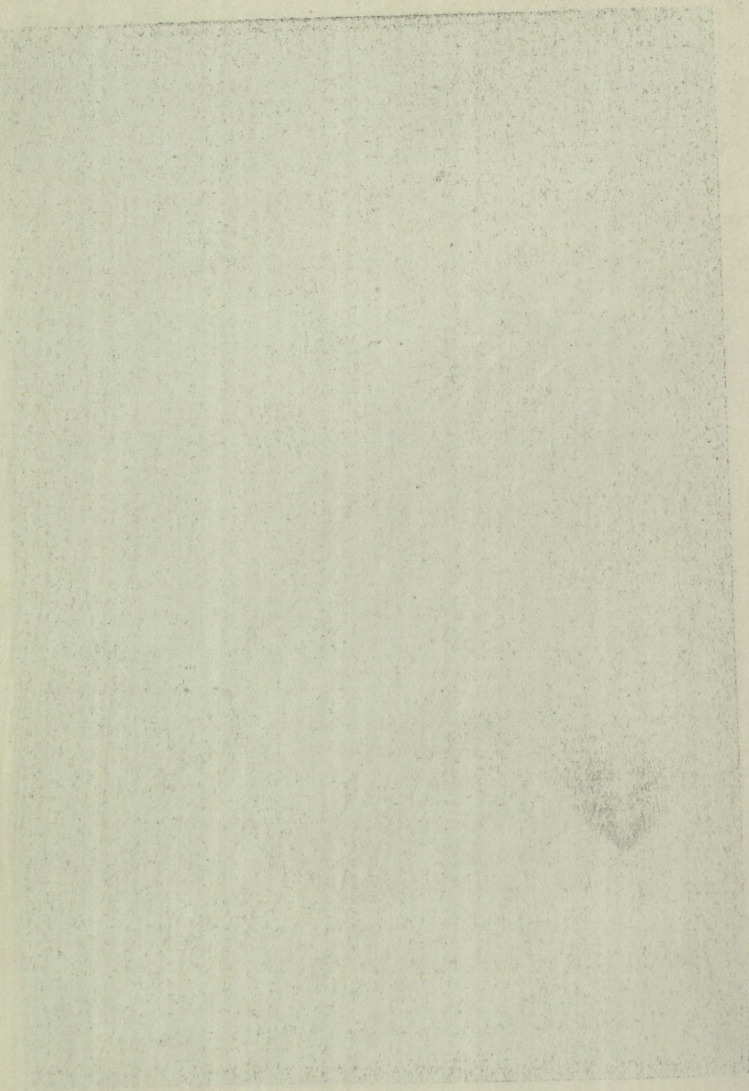
Veneering and marquetry were general in wooden furniture of a costly kind, the methods being as now practised; the woods mostly used were wild and cultivated olive, box, ebony (Corsican especially), holm oak, beech, Syrian terebinth, maple, palm, holly, root of elder, poplar on a base of figwood, willow, plane, elm, ash, cherry or corkwood. Tortoise-shell, horn and ivory, both plain and stained, were also used as veneers, and the wood of large pieces of furniture was sometimes grained to represent costly kinds, showing that this imitation is not a modern invention.

There are curious historical records of the endurance of some ancient wood structures. The cedar roof of the temple of Diana at Ephesus was intact at the end of four centuries, in Pliny's time; the black figure of the goddess, supposed to be of ebony, but according to others of vine, had outlasted various rebuildings of the temple. The roof beams of the temple of Apollo at Utica were of cedar, and had been laid 348 years before the foundation of Rome so that in Pliny's time they were nearly 1,200 years old, and still sound.



FIG. 42.—PORTION OF AN IVORY DIPTYCH of Anastasius Paulus Probus Sabinianus Pompeius,
 Consul A.D. 517. BYZANTINE.

(In the Museum, No. 368-1871.)



Rome, whose powers had long been declining, was taken by the Goths under Alaric in 410 A.D., and this date may conveniently be regarded as the close of the classic period of Roman art.

BYZANTIUM.

The next period to be considered is that which witnessed the dissolution of the old Roman Empire and the gradual formation of a new order of society. During more than seven centuries the incessant state of war, invasion, and struggle in Italy was too destructive of personal wealth and the means of showing it in costly furniture to leave any materials to illustrate the present subject. The history of furniture and woodwork now belongs to such civilisation as took its origin and form from Constantinople. Art of these centuries is called Byzantine, and flourished from the time of Constantine when the seat of empire was removed to Byzantium in 321 A.D., till about

1204, when that city was taken by the Latins. The woodcut (Fig. 43) represents the chair of "St. Peter" at Rome, the oldest and most interesting relic of antique wooden furniture in existence. It is overlaid with ivory and gold, and the first known mention of it is by Ennodius, Bishop of Pavia in 500 A.D.

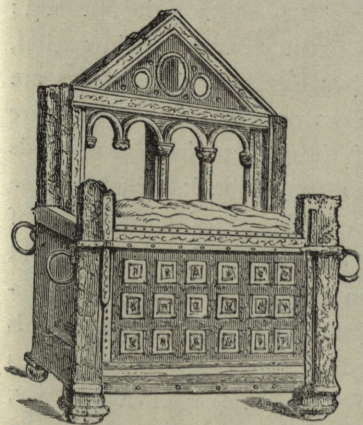


FIG. 43.—CHAIR OF "ST. PETER," in Rome.

Byzantine art is a debased form of the classic, largely modified by Asiatic Greek, which derived so much of its splendour from the rich but unimaginative decoration of Persia. The knowledge of it is mostly derived from designs on

small objects of ivory or metal, such as caskets and especially consular diptychs, of which a considerable number, besides many reproductions, may be studied in the Museum. In that of Anastasius Paulus Probus Sabinianus Pompeius, Consul, A.D. 517 (No. 368—1871), the consul is represented seated on a throne of very ornate character (*see* Fig. 42). It resembles the old folding curule chairs of Rome, but shows elements both of Greek and Egyptian ornamentation, such as lions' heads with rings in their mouths for carrying it. The small winged victories standing on globes on each side of the seat probably represent the fronts of the arm supports. This feature also is a continuation of a type found on Greek vases and the chairs of both Nineveh and Egypt. A low footstool with embroidered cushion is under the consul's feet, and another cushion covers the seat.

A seat still more like the curule chair, but with a high back, is seen on another ivory (No. 270—1867) in the Museum; this is a plaque of the ninth century carved in low relief, with St. Peter and St. Mark (*see* Fig. 44). The chairs are both formed of two curved pieces on each side, which are jointed together; one pair of these is prolonged upwards and connected by woodwork to form a back, which in one chair can be seen to be solid and decorated with a row of balusters towards the top. The lyre back, a form found in old Greek furniture, and from them adopted by the Romans, reappears in chairs shown on ivories and manuscripts of this period. Other chairs with turned legs are shown on two ivories (Nos. 295—1867 and 381—1871) of the twelfth century, and one (No. 273—1867) of the following century. Round cushions were hung on the back and placed on the seat, such as are also figured in the mosaics of Venice and later of Monreale in Sicily, which retained much of the Byzantine spirit.

A chair known as St. Maximian's, preserved at Ravenna,



FIG. 44.—IVORY BOOK COVER carved with St. Peter dictating the Gospel to St. Mark at Rome. BYZANTINE; 9th century.

(In the Museum, No. 270-1867.)



is a remarkable piece of monumental furniture*; it is of wood overlaid with plaques of ivory carved with scenes from the life of Joseph, and is said to date from the sixth century, but some of the ivory panels are certainly of later date.

Beds represented in MSS. and ivories occur chiefly in religious compositions, such as the Nativity or visions appearing to saints in their sleep. An example of the eleventh century may be seen on an ivory in the Museum (No. 296—1867) illustrated in Fig. 45. These are beds of the old Roman form, supported in some cases on turned legs, and valances hang from the frames to the ground. Sometimes a curtain is arranged as a screen at the head or one side, but testers do not appear.

The Museum contains an interesting wooden coffret (No. 582—1854) with a sloping lid, carved with monsters and scrollwork and enriched with colour, which dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Chariots and carriages of all sorts remained more or less Roman in type. In the Byzantine period the number of wagons or carriages for the conveyance of women and children was greater than in earlier times. Christianity had materially altered the social position of women, and they appeared in public with a freedom not allowed by the conventions of old Roman society, which had compelled them to use closed litters or coaches. Several forms of chariots or carriages of a large kind can be seen in the sculptures on the column of Theodosius at Constantinople. Chariots were in constant use, much wealth being spent on them, and chariot races were encouraged.

The arts and domestic manners and customs of the Roman Empire maintained themselves with modifications in

* Engraved and described in *Arts somptuaires*, by Du Sommerard, and in *Fictile Ivories in South Kensington Museum*, by Westwood.

Byzantium, where life was equally showy and pompous, but free from much of the cruelty and corruption of the former. Furniture was exceedingly rich and the precious metals were freely used. For as the hordes of northern barbarians encroached more and more on the flourishing provinces of the Roman Empire, constant emigration took place to Constantinople and the provinces under its sway, the immigrants bringing with them easily portable property, such as gold and jewels, which were afterwards used in decoration of furniture and dress.

The custom of the ancients to recline at meals had ceased, and the guests sat on benches or chairs. At the same time the "*triclinia aurea*" or golden dining-room was still the title of the great hall of audience in the palaces of Constantinople. The term, however, only served to illustrate the jealous retention of the old forms and names employed by the emperors and patricians. Byzantium did little for the arts of painting and sculpture, though for a long while it preserved the old traditions of art that gradually became more and more debased.

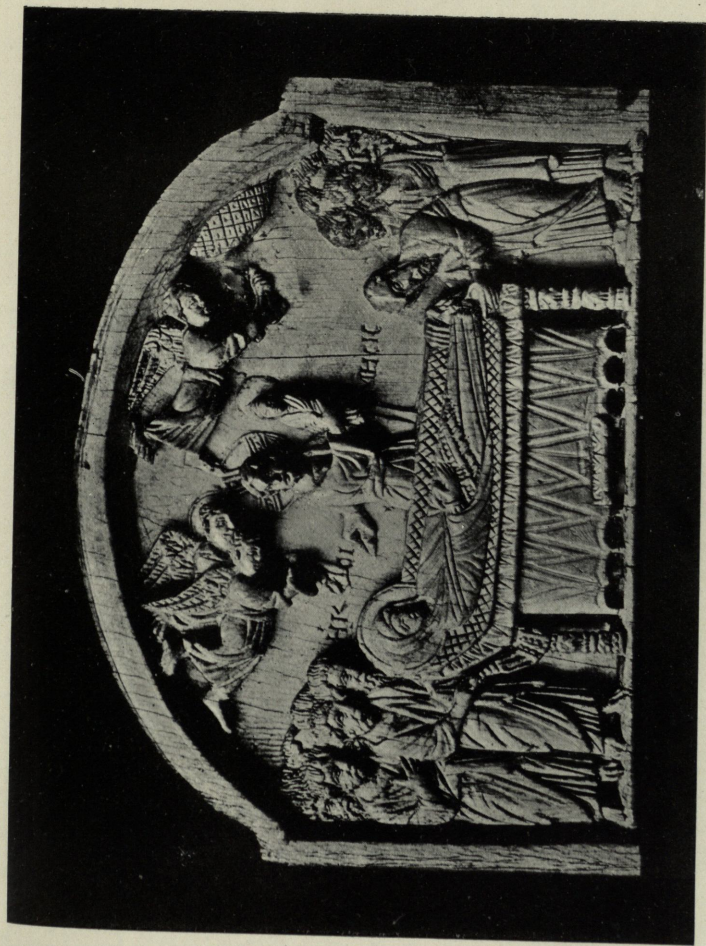


FIG. 45.—PORTION OF AN IVORY BOOK-COVER carved with the death of the Virgin. BYZANTINE; 11th century.
(In the Museum, No. 296-1867.)



CHAPTER IV.

ENGLAND: ANGLO-SAXON AND NORMAN PERIOD.

The history of applied art in England may conveniently be divided into the following periods:—Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Norman, Gothic, Renaissance with Elizabethan and Jacobean phases, Carolean, eighteenth century, including the "Adam" and "Empire" styles. These periods, especially the later ones, are of course not abruptly separated from one another, but each gradually merges into the following one, until in process of time the differing conditions produce different styles of art which can be distinguished as such.

The story of English furniture begins with the Anglo-Saxons, for under the long domination of the Romans, Britain was merely a Roman province and had no separate national existence. The furniture of that time was, like other artistic products, Roman in character, and as such has been dealt with earlier in this volume. Of the rude and far-off times when the Celts occupied these islands there are not sufficient remains to enable one to gain a knowledge of the furniture they possessed, but the beauty of the few metal objects that have survived would lead one to surmise that it must have had great artistic merit. It appears from the old Welsh romances and poems that they had chests for their clothes, and also saddles of wood. Moreover, carpentry is mentioned as one of the earliest of their crafts. They must also have had considerable skill in shipbuilding, for they were intrepid

sailors, sailing stormiest seas in their flat-bottomed ships with high sterns and prows.

The date when mediæval art began cannot easily be determined. That peculiar characteristic, known as romantic, enters into the art of mediæval times, as it does into the literature and manners of the same ages. It took a living form in the half-religious institution of chivalry. The northern nations grew up as much under the leadership of monks as under that of kings. They lived in territories only partially cleared of forests, pushed their way forward to power, pioneered by the great religious orders, and their world was one surrounded by opportunities of endless adventures. But this romantic standard, (though it took its rise from the times in which Christians took their lives in their hands under the persecuting emperors), did not pervade Europe for many centuries.

During these ages ecclesiastical influence in all departments of life was greatly predominant, both directly and indirectly, and the more gifted members of the Church, which inherited the traditions and the highly centralised system of the Roman Empire, were moved about freely from country to country to learn as well as to teach. It followed that architecture and the arts as a whole bore a general resemblance, especially in the earlier centuries before the various nations of Europe had developed individual styles.

It must be remembered, moreover, that the Roman Empire had been firmly planted beyond the Alps, and that Gaul produced good Roman art in the second and third centuries. Architecture, sculpture, bronze casting and the numberless appliances of daily life were completely Roman in many parts of France and Britain. The theatres and amphitheatres of Arles and Orange and the collections in various museums suffice to show the predominance of the Roman civilization.

It was not until the old traditions had been much developed or modified by Oriental influence, that characteristic mediæval art was established in Italy, France, Germany and England. To the last it remained semi-classic in Rome itself.

Anglo-Saxon art "was derived from two sources, one coming from Continental Europe, the other from Ireland, where Celtic art had taken refuge and developed independently."*

Norman art had much in common with the Anglo-Saxon, but was more strongly influenced by the debased form of classic art known as the Romanesque, which was characterised by the use of the circle and the round arch. These two periods, therefore, ranging from the fifth to the early part of the thirteenth century will be considered together. Illuminated manuscripts form almost the sole source of information, for hardly a vestige of actual furniture of the time exists.†

Judging from these manuscripts the style of furniture varied but little during the whole period, though the Normans introduced greater variety and richness into the surroundings of life. It should be borne in mind that, as usual in earlier art, the accessories introduced are always of the artist's own time, whatever the date of the subject of the picture. Also in considering the specimens of furniture represented allowance has to be made for the artist's imagination and in some cases, no doubt, for his want of skill.

Metallurgy in the precious metals and in bronze, including

* Barnard, *Companion to English History* [Middle Ages], p. 329.

† In Clynno Church, Carnarvon, is preserved a chest known as St. Beuno's, which dates from Anglo-Saxon times. It consists simply of a tree trunk roughly hewn and heavily bound with iron. A similar coffer stands in Wimborne Minster. In the Library of Durham Cathedral are fragments of the coffin of St. Cuthbert (d. 687) decorated with figures of saints and angels, in incised lines. These designs which are of very rude execution show classical influence.

the gilding of bronze may have preceded the invasion of Britain by the Romans, and was probably the one art that survived their departure. It is scarcely probable that tin and copper ores would have been sought for in this country by foreigners, had not manufactured objects of metal in the first instance found their way from this country to the south. Be that, however, as it may, it can scarcely be doubted that metal thrones, chairs and utensils were made here during the Celtic period as in Gaul.

There is an interesting collection of Saxon ornaments in gold, bronze, and bronze ornamented with gilding and enamel, in the British Museum. These objects were dug up chiefly at Faversham in Kent; they chiefly consist of fibulæ, brooches and buckles, portions of horse-trapping, bosses, etc., and are not recognisable as parts of bronze furniture; but on examining them it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that during the Saxon occupation fine objects of household use were also made.

The tenth century was not favourable to the development of the requirements or comforts of personal life, especially towards the year 1000, when a superstition prevailed over many parts of Europe that the world would come to an end when the century was completed. The eleventh century witnessed a great advance in architecture and other arts, but prior to the Norman invasion this country was far behind the continental nations in the fine arts, metallurgy only excepted.

Tables were in general merely boards upon trestles and when not required could easily be packed away. Other tables, however, apparently of a more permanent nature were used. In an eleventh century MS. is shown a round table with legs ending in massive carved feet. The personages dining at it are evidently of high rank, being served on bended knee.

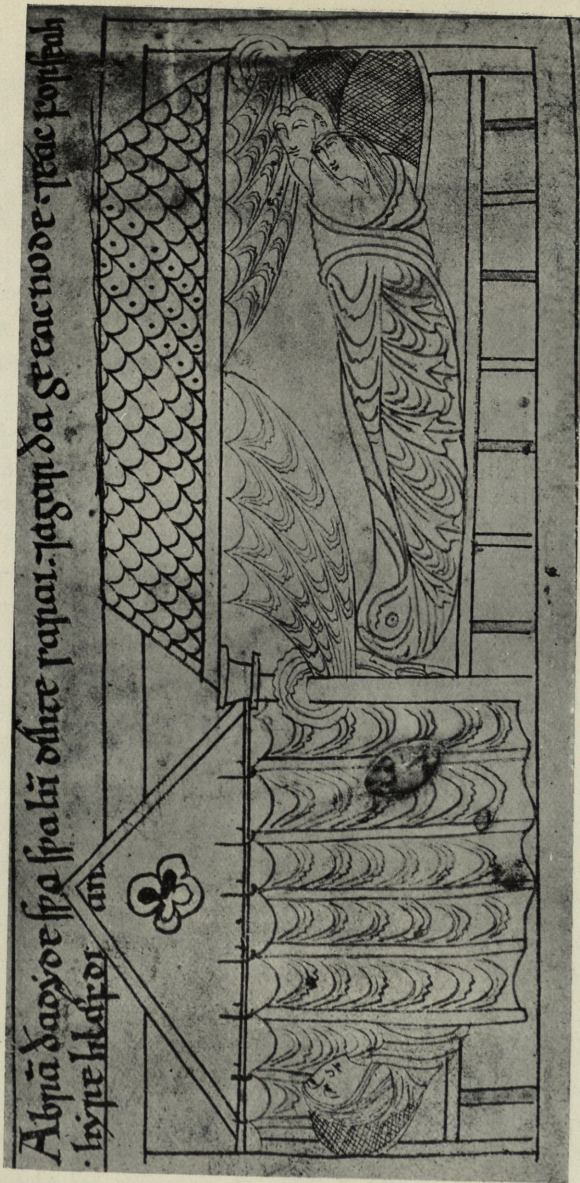


FIG. 46.—ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT. ANGLO-SAXON; 11TH CENTURY.
 (In the British Museum, Claud B iv., fol. 27.)



In another manuscript of the same date is a round table with a single massive support. The board of this table possibly turned up on a hinge like the old parlour tea-tables. Other circular tables illustrated in manuscripts of this date have three (or four) supports in the form of animals' legs, each surmounted by a head. It is supposed that these round tables, named "myse," "disc," (from Latin *discus*), and "beod," all of which terms imply roundness, were for use in the private chamber or bower, as distinct from the hall. In a twelfth century MS. is shown a long table with eight legs which could scarcely have been a trestle table.

The commonest form of seats were the bench and stool, both without backs, but chairs, settles and settees of elaborate shapes, sometimes richly decorated, were used by persons of rank, as is frequently shown in pictures of the time. Often, no doubt, chests and coffer were used as seats and it is probable that in some cases the coffer and the seat were combined in one piece of furniture as at a later period. The furniture of the hall, the principal living-room, seems to have been chiefly benches. At one end, probably on a raised daïs, was the high seat for the lord of the house, and others for distinguished guests. The shape of these seats varied considerably. In a manuscript of the eighth or ninth century* there is a sort of curule chair without back, the cross-legs of which are decorated with the heads of animals above and their feet below.† In another manuscript written in the eleventh century and preserved in the Cambridge University Library, is a very similar seat. Another MS. also dating from the eleventh century shows a raised seat large enough for three persons, which is ornamented at each end with the

* *De Virginitate*, in the Lambeth Palace Library.

† See also the Bayeux Tapestry.

half figure of an animal. In each case the seat is covered with a rich cushion. On Royal seals from William I. to John, the king is shown seated on a throne, which has apparently no back, but has turned side supports for the arms, crowned with knobs. In the seal of Henry, son of Henry II., instead of these knobs are projecting animals' heads. Seats were frequently so high as to require the use of a stool (*scamel*).

The simplest and most usual mode of making up a bed was to lay down loose straw or a bag filled with straw either on the floor or on a bench, the latter being sometimes placed in an alcove (*bed-cofa*), across the opening of which a curtain was probably hung. Examples of such alcoves are shown from a manuscript of the eleventh century (see Fig. 46). No doubt alcoves were also regularly fitted up as bed-



FIG. 47.—ANGLO-NORMAN BEDSTEAD.
From a MS. (see Willemin. *Monuments*
Français inédits).

steads; this practice was continued till quite recent times in England and is at the present day common abroad. But separate bedsteads were also made, as may be seen from another manuscript of the eleventh century, in which two are shown shaped like a modern child's crib, each with six posts crowned with knobs; the bedheads are marked by being made higher and decorated with volutes (see Fig. 48). Tester beds or beds with a roof at the head are said to have been introduced after the Conquest. The bed without tester, shown in Fig. 47, is of the Anglo-Norman period. Cradles appear not to have been very general, at least in the earlier part of this period, and it is probable that only wealthy people possessed them.*

* A cradle of very simple construction is shown in Wright, *Homes of other Days*, p. 64.



FIG. 48.—ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT. ANGLO-SAXON; 11th century.
(In the British Museum, Harl. 603, fol. 3.)



Chests, coffers, boxes and cupboards were undoubtedly used, and it is but reasonable to suppose that they were decorated, though there is scarcely any evidence to show in what manner. In a manuscript of the earlier half of the twelfth century is depicted a cupboard of considerable size with a pyramidal roof and finials. The door, which is open, is semi-circular above, of a shape frequently met with in long case clocks of the eighteenth century, and is enriched with gracefully curved hinge-bands.

Roofs in the Norman period were almost always supported on tie-beams, which helped to hold the walls together, the weight of the roof being brought down to the tie-beam by the king-post and struts. Examples may be seen at Adel in Yorkshire and Whitwell in Rutlandshire.

Woodwork used in buildings was very generally painted. It is stated, for instance, that the wood ceiling of the former Norman Choir of Canterbury Cathedral was so decorated, as was also the ceiling of Peterborough Cathedral; this latter was flat or only slightly canted. It is most probable that furniture as well was chiefly ornamented in this manner. Woodwork was, besides being decorated with painting, also carved and turned, though apparently not to so great an extent as later, and the metal furniture used was highly ornamented.

Vehicles were rare during this period, the most usual mode of travelling being on horseback, but carts on two wheels were common for agricultural use, and served to transport the Royal property. An illustration in an Anglo-Saxon MS. of Prudentius, shows a two-wheeled carriage somewhat resembling the Roman *biga*, from which the idea was probably taken. Four-wheeled carriages are also occasionally met with, as, for instance, those in the Bayeux Tapestry, which are filled with warlike stores and drawn by men. In the Battle of the Standard (1138) the flag of the English host was borne on a wheeled car or platform.

CHAPTER V.

ENGLAND: GOTHIC PERIOD.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mediæval art in Europe reached its greatest perfection. The classic traditions were at last forgotten everywhere except in Rome itself, where a chain lingered almost continuous between the old ideas and those which succeeded in the sixteenth century. Elsewhere the feeling of sculpture, whether of wood or other materials, was in unison with the architecture of the pointed arch, and Gothic art reigned unchallenged. Its influence is clearly seen in furniture, which during the whole period was closely allied to architecture.

The construction of woodwork gradually became more careful and scientific. The mouldings in woodwork were as a rule simpler than in the corresponding stonework, but more delicate, thin and sharp. The panelling of rooms was introduced into England during the reign of Henry III. (1216-1272), who ordered a chamber at Windsor Castle to be panelled with Norway pine specially imported. The boards were coloured, and it is stated that only two clear days were allowed for the fixing and completion. Panelled framework came into use, though seldom for doors of rooms. The chests, however, which during centuries formed the chief article of furniture in the mediæval sleeping, sitting, or private rooms were put together by this method of construction. The chest (known also as coffer, locker, ark, hutch) continued in popularity as late as the seventeenth century.

Until towards the end of the fifteenth century England was in general far behind most nations of the Continent in the

conveniences and elegances of life. Luxurious and artistic furniture was only to be found in the palaces and castles of royalty and the nobles, and in the richer monasteries and abbeys. The standard of life among the middle and lower classes was simple and rude in the extreme, and even in the higher ranks fashions and tastes appear to have come from abroad and not to have changed rapidly. This was probably largely owing to our insular position, which tended to keep the nation poor and to impede the interchange of ideas. The bareness of the interior of houses appears clearly from the manuscript illustrations of the time.

The few pieces of furniture that have survived from these times are all of oak ; other woods, such as beech, elm, deal and chestnut, were also used, but objects made of them have perished. The two last-named woods were rare and valuable. Walnut was scarcely used in England till about 1500 and not largely till some considerable time after. The beautiful markings on the surface of oak, called its "figure," having the appearance of diagonal splashes, were obtained by cutting the planks at right angles to a vertical plane running through the centre of the trunk. This was a wasteful method, but oak was then exceedingly plentiful. These splashes being cellular do not shrink with age like the rest of the wood. A peculiarity of them is that they appear lighter or darker in colour, according to the position in which they are viewed.



FIG. 49.—BEDSTEAD; early Gothic.

Judging by illustrations in MSS., furniture at this time was generally enriched by gilding and painting, which

latter was in tempera or encaustic. Hangings also were a favourite method of decoration, as in the bedstead in Fig. 49.

The new style of architecture was firmly established in England about the middle of the thirteenth century, and began with the narrow or lancet arch without tracery. In the Museum is a door (No. 754—1895, *see* Fig. 50), which is a fine specimen of work towards the end of the first phase of Gothic art, when "plate" tracery was beginning. The mouldings and enrichments are carved out of the solid, as was usual at this period.

The decoration of woodwork, especially of coffers and doors, was often effected by iron applied in the form of strengthening bands and expansions of the hinges. A coffer (No. 733—1895) in the Museum, of French make, may serve as a specimen of this type of ornament in the thirteenth century. Among coffers of the Gothic period in various parts of the country may be cited one of oak of the time of King John, preserved in the Castle of Rockingham, richly decorated with hammered iron plates and hinges, another carved with lancet arcading and roundels of "chip"-carving at Climping Church, Sussex,* a third, also with "chip"-carved roundels, at Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey,* and a coffer at Newport, Essex,* painted in front with shields and inside the lid with the Crucifixion, the Virgin, St. John the Evangelist and two Saints, beneath five lancet-headed arches. The ends of coffers of this period were usually made of panels set in a massive framework, resembling a grating, of solid uprights and cross-pieces.

Gothic figure-carving is illustrated in the Museum by a group (No. 23—1881) carved in high relief, representing the Saviour (?) supporting in front of Him a cross. Remains of

* Illustrated in Roe, *Ancient Coffers and Chests*.



FIG. 50.—OAK DOOR. ENGLISH; second half of the 13th century.
(In the Museum, No. 754-1895.)



gilding on canvas are visible on the carving, which dates from about 1250.

Canterbury Cathedral contains a splendid specimen of sculpture in wood of the time, in the recumbent effigy of Archbishop Peckham (d. 1292). It is made of oak and was originally painted. Foreign artists had already been invited to England, among them being Master William, the Florentine, a monk of Westminster Abbey, and master of the works at Guildford Castle under Henry III. John of St. Omer

was another foreign artist employed by this king. To the former of these was probably due the introduction of the method of gilding and tooled gold work, with which wood was decorated. Traces of such work are still discernible on the famous coronation chair (see Fig. 51) in Westminster Abbey, made about the year 1300.

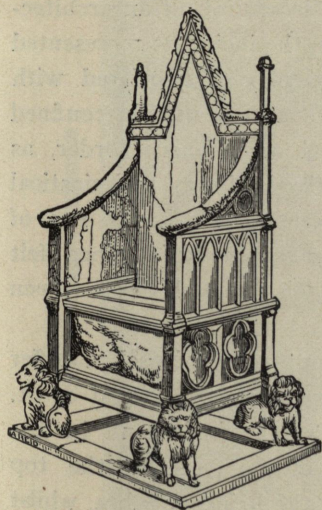


FIG. 51.—CORONATION CHAIR.
About 1300. In Westminster Abbey.

From the end of the thirteenth to the latter part of the fourteenth century Gothic art entered on another phase, called "decorated," which was characterized by a widened

arch based on the equilateral triangle, the arch being filled in with tracery. This is well exemplified by a fourteenth century coffer in Haconby Church, Lincolnshire, decorated with arcading in front and monsters on the stiles,* another, known as the "Jewel Chest," in St. Mary Magdalene Church,

* Illustrated in Roe, *Ancient Coffers and Chests*.

Oxford,* and a third at Saltwood Church, Kent.* A coffer at Dersingham Church, in Norfolk,* shows arcading on the stiles, but the chief part of the front is occupied by the symbols of the evangelists with their names in Lombardic characters; a cast of the front (No. '02—99) is shown in the Museum.

In the fourteenth century mythical and warlike subjects seem to have become popular amongst the upper classes, for coffers of that date, as well as of the early part of the succeeding century, often combine decoration of an architectural nature with groups of figures, the incidents represented being frequently those of the tourney or associated with deeds of arms. The architectural features, usually confined to the stiles, are of a castellated or defensive order, as distinct from the tracery derived from ecclesiastical architecture. This departure seems to mark the rise of an independent national spirit making its influence felt beside that of the church, which had hitherto been dominant.

There is in the Museum the front panel of such a coffer (No. 82—1893, *see* Fig. 52), carved with the legend of St. George, who became the patron saint of England in the fourteenth century. On the left of the panel at the top is the saint offering his services to the Princess Sabra, whilst beneath he is wounding the dragon. On the right is shown the hero following the princess, who leads the dragon into the city, where the king and queen are watching from their castle windows. A touch of humour is given to the scene by the rabbits popping in and out of their burrows while the lion at the top might be held to symbolise England. There is an almost exact replica of this carving, but reversed in arrangement, in a coffer preserved in York Minster. In

* Illustrated in Roc, *Ancient Coffers and Chests*,



FIG. 52.—OAK PANEL. ENGLISH; 14th century.

(In the Museum, No. 82-1893.)



Harty Church, Kent, there is a coffer carved in front with a tilting scene, dating from early in the fifteenth century.

The seals of the first three Edwards and of Henry IV. show thrones richly ornamented with Gothic arcading and pinnacles, and most probably give an idea of the actual throne. The tomb of the last-named King (d. 1413) in Canterbury Cathedral is surmounted by a painted wood canopy with a leafwork cresting, and over the tomb of the Black Prince (d. 1376) in the same Cathedral is a similar canopy with battlemented cresting.

A charming little coffret (No. 301—1885) in the Museum may be mentioned here. It is of box-wood with a sloping lid, and is carved in panels with figures and grotesques. It dates from early in the fourteenth century, but the brass fittings are later.

In the furniture of bedrooms, linen chests, settles, cupboards, and the bedsteads themselves were of panelled wood. The next woodcuts (Figs. 53, 54) show the interior of two



FIG. 53.—BEDROOM.

From a MS. *Romance of Meliadus*, written in the 14th century. (In the British Museum, Addit. No. 12228, fol. 312.)



FIG. 54. — BEDROOM.

Birth of St. Edmund, from a MS. life of the saint, written about 1400. (In the British Museum, MS. Harl. No. 2278.)

well-furnished bedrooms of the fourteenth century and in Figs. 55, 56 are shown two scribes at work; these latter are from manuscripts of about 1440-50, and give interesting details of chairs, tables, and desks of that time.

The wardrobe was a special room fitted with closets for storing clothes, etc. This arrangement was common in large castles during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Chests served as tables, and are often represented in old illuminations with chess-boards on them. Since coffer were used as seats they began in the thirteenth century



FIG. 55.—ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT, ENGLISH;
about 1440.
(Art Library, V. & A.M. Reid MSS., No. 44.)



FIG. 56.—ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT, ENGLISH;
about 1450.
(Art Library, V. & A.M. Reid MSS., No. 45.)



to be furnished with a panelled back and arm-pieces at either end. They do not seem to have been raised on legs or made into cabinets until a later period. The high dorsal or back of the seat was in large rooms a protection from the cold and in the form of the settle is still the comfort of old farm and inn kitchens; it became the general type of seats of state in the great halls and was there further improved by a panelled canopy projecting forward to protect the heads of the sitters. The lower tier of the choir-stalls in Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster, without the partitions, shows exactly what these canopied seats were like. The backing and canopy were sometimes replaced by temporary arrangements of hangings as in modern royal throne-rooms, the cloth being called cloth of estate and generally embroidered with heraldic devices. Panelled cupboards called "dresseirs," in which food was kept, were common in well-furnished rooms; narrow shelves rose in steps at the back for the display of plate, these steps varying in number according to the rank of the owner. At meal times a cloth was laid on the top of the "dresseir."

Tables used at meals were generally framed boards, either in one piece or



FIG. 57.—TRESTLE TABLE.

From a MS. "Les cents nouvelles nouvelles" written about the middle of the 15th century. (In the Hunterian Library, Glasgow.)

folding in the middle, supported on trestles. Later the tables, although still on trestles, were made more solidly, even for the use of people of the middle classes. The table shown in Fig. 57 is from a manuscript of about the middle of the fifteenth century. A curious table standing on a pedestal shaped like the foot of a chalice is shown here (Fig. 58); it comes from an illustration in a manuscript of the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century Gothic art entered on its final phase, known as the "Perpendicular," which, as the name suggests, was characterised by the prominence of upright lines, that were frequently carried



FIG. 58.—ROUND TABLE.

From a MS. written early in the 15th century.

through arches and curves. The tendency to widen arches continued until towards the close, in the Tudor period, the upper border of open spaces and windows approached the horizontal, being formed by obtuse angled arches struck from four points. The creative vigour of the style was failing and the period was one of more and more rapid decadence. Perpendicular Gothic differed

more widely than previous forms from the Continental, and became more truly a national style, being an expression of the rise of national feeling and power in England. The style

lent itself well to the decoration of furniture, which was richly developed, and became, as the wealth of the country steadily increased, far more general not only in ecclesiastical but also in secular buildings.

- Though churches, castles and manors were built of stone or brick, yet whole cities seem to have been mainly constructed out of timber. The London of the fifteenth century, like a hundred other cities, though abounding in noble churches and in great fortified palaces, yet presented the aspect of a timber city. The houses were framed together, as a few still are in some English towns and villages, of vast posts, in some cases as much as twenty-four inches square in section, arching outwards and meeting the projecting upper floor rafters till the narrow streets were darkened with the projections. The surfaces of these posts and the cross-timbers were covered with tracery, niches and images. The upper portion of such a corner post of great size, and its surface beautifully carved with tracery, is to be seen in the Museum (No. 895—1892); it came from a house at Bury St. Edmunds, built in the fifteenth century. In the Museum is also a carved wooden group (No. 37—1887) of the Virgin holding the Infant Saviour being herself seated in the lap of her mother, St. Anne; this group might have been taken from the angle of a great building, though it actually came from the chapel of Bude Castle. In the old streets of Chester an open gallery or passage is left on the first floor within the timbers of the house-fronts. In the court of St. Mary's Guild, at Coventry, whole chambers and galleries are supported on vast arches of timber like bridges.

The construction of great wooden roofs of churches and halls began as early as the twelfth and continued to improve through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the period during which the finest efforts of mediæval Gothic art

were embodied all over the north and parts of the south of Europe.

In the first Gothic period tie-beams began to be sparingly used, the rafters being simply trussed together. In decorated architecture were introduced hammerbeams, which, considered in opposite pairs, may be described as the ends of a tie-beam with the centre part removed. The surface of the roof was usually divided by moulded ribs into panels filled in with tracery and the whole richly gilt and coloured. Carving also was lavishly used, especially in the later periods. Towards the end of the Perpendicular period roofs began to be made much flatter.

The older part of Westminster Hall dates from the reign of Rufus (1087-1100) and the walls of the present building belong to that period, though faced at a later time. How the roof over the enormous space, sixty-five feet in width, was at first constructed there is no evidence to show. It had perhaps a row of arches down the middle like the great hall of the Palace of Blois, said to be of the thirteenth century, or huge king-posts supporting the ties between the rafters, which in that case may have been as long as those of the later roof. The present roof, work of the end of the fourteenth century (1399), marks the beginning of the change to the Perpendicular style. The ties are supported by curved braces which rise like arches from stone corbels let into the wall to receive them. These braces take two flights, being tied back where they meet by hammer-beams into the lower part of the rafter. The lower brace upholds another upright or collar-post, which supports the junction of these beams with the rafter at its weakest point. A rich sub-division of mullions with cusped archheads fills up the spandrels between these braces and the beams they support, and adds rigidity as well as decoration to the whole.

The roof of the hall of Eltham Palace in Kent, is built on a

plan similar to the foregoing, but is of smaller size. Such constructions were not only more scientific than those of older date but more imposing and complicated, and have a greater affinity with the architecture of the day.

In the Museum is a fine example (No. 725—1902) of ceilings to be found in private houses. It is of oak with plain mouldings, the great central beam, twenty-two feet long by twelve inches square, being also carved with two bands of broad and effective leafwork. It was formerly in a house at Clare in Suffolk, and was made in the latter part of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century. A door (No. 727—1902) of vertical planks about six inches wide, and a carved oak gateway (No. 726—1902) from the same place are characteristic works of the same time.

A beautiful feature in roofs and ceilings was the boss introduced at the intersection of beams. These were usually carved with leafwork, amid which were often placed heraldic shields and devices. In the Museum are some bosses (Nos. 8212 to 8220—1863) of considerable size, dating from the fifteenth century, which are said to come from a former palace of the bishops of Exeter and were among a collection of old woodwork used as specimens in decorating the present Houses of Parliament. Casts of three smaller bosses (Nos. '02—100 to 102) with shields among vine ornament can also be seen in the Museum. The originals were carved about the year 1400, and decorated a former ceiling of Dersingham Church, Norfolk.

Figure sculpture of the latter years of the fifteenth century, though life-sized statues had lost much of the dignity and simplicity of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was approaching the realisation of natural form, which it attained in such excellence in the succeeding century. The ingenuity and raciness of the small figure carving, so freely introduced in decoration during the last half of the century is scarcely

surpassed by the more academic and classical figure design of the sixteenth. There are in the Museum some small carved and painted wooden figures (Nos. 411 to 416—1889) which merit attention for the dignity and impressiveness they possess, though on so small a scale. They represent the Saviour, the Virgin Mary and four of the Apostles, all seated, and probably formed parts of an altar-piece. Other small carvings of the time include a group (No. 376—1890) in oak, of the Virgin and Child, a bracket (No. 377—1890) from Malmesbury Abbey carved with the Assumption of the Virgin, and a gilt group (No. 304—1887) representing the ordeal according to the Jewish rite, of a woman accused of unchastity.

During the last quarter of the fifteenth century there was introduced, it is believed from Flanders, a form of decoration for panels based upon the folds of linen, hence known as the "linen-fold" or "linen" pattern,* which was very widely and frequently used. It lasted upwards of eighty years, being found in England as late as 1550, and rather longer abroad. In its simplest form it consisted of a single fold represented in

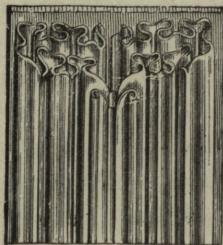


FIG. 59.—OAK PANEL.
ENGLISH; late 15th, or early
16th century. (In the
Museum.
No. 8139-'63.)

relief by a central vertical line and two side ones joined above and below by ogee-shaped lines. In some cases these latter lines are nearly horizontal. In the Museum are two doors (Nos. 135—1894 and 123—1906) decorated with a simple type of this ornament. From this simple pattern it varies to highly elaborated examples of many folds, such as is illustrated in Fig. 59, and

* It may be noted here that the arrangement of drapery in the older recumbent statues of the Gothic period was evidently often taken from upright models.

may be seen on some woodwork at an inn at Rye House, probably removed from the great house. Sometimes decorative bordering at the top and bottom was introduced, also founded on textile originals, and in some instances the edges themselves were fretted with cusps and other Gothic decoration. Examples of this are to be seen in the Museum in some panelling (No. 539—1892) formerly in a farm-house near Taunton and an oak door (No. 368—1905) with fleur-de-lys cresting. When placed in panels under pointed or round arches the top line usually followed the arch. In most cases the lower edges, especially when near the ground, were left undecorated. A variation of this ornament consists of

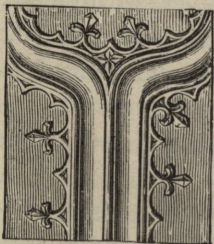


FIG. 60.—OAK PANEL.
ENGLISH OR FLEMISH, late
15th or early 16th century. (In
the Museum.
No. 8191—'63.)

two bands with ogee ends, placed side by side so as to resemble somewhat the letter I, whence it has been conjectured that it may represent the initial letter of the word *Ἰησοῦς*, with what truth cannot now be said (see Fig. 60).

A striking feature of Gothic art is the openwork decoration of canopies to niches, known as "tabernacle-work," which at its height consisted of a rich assemblage of arches, tracery, pinnacles and other architectural details. It appeared first in the fourteenth century and was continued down to the Tudor period. In Canterbury Cathedral the tomb of Archbishop Kemp (d. 1454) is surmounted by an elaborate painted wooden canopy of this description.

The stalls and the choirs of cathedrals and great churches were generally of a highly ornamental and often of a magnificent character. They lined the north and south sides of the choir and often had returns at the west end with seats for the

higher clergy. In many instances they were surmounted by tabernacle work, and the backs, the dividing posts and panels, and the arm-rests were ornamented with mouldings and carvings. The seat was generally hinged, and on the under side was placed a bracket forming, when the main seat was turned up, a small secondary seat to assist in supporting the stall occupant in long periods of standing. This was called a "Miserere" and was the subject of some of the quaintest and most characteristic of Gothic carving, often displaying a vein of sarcasm and real, though coarse, humour. Usually from the mouldings of the bracket sprang on each side an ornament called a supporter also finely carved. They range in date from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, but the earlier are by far the most vigorous in design and execution. There is an interesting series in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster, mostly of the sixteenth century. Some originals and many casts may be studied in the Architectural Museum, Westminster.

Less important churches had benches, the ends of which were often decorated with carving. In Devon and Somerset these ends have mostly square tops, while in the eastern counties they are frequently ogee-shaped with a finial called a "poppy-head." In the Museum are two simple bench-ends (Nos. 573, 574—1898) of the latter type, dating from the fifteenth century, three poppy-heads (Nos. 669, 670—1902) removed from similar objects, and the upper portion of an oak stall-end (No. 299—1907) carved with a panel representation of St. George and the Dragon.

Pulpits and reading-desks were also highly decorated, and many are to be still found in various parts of the country, some particularly fine ones being in Devon and Somerset. In the Museum is a reading-desk (No. 143—1898) of the fifteenth century, simply carved with two tiers of arcading.

A most interesting and striking class of objects are the rood-screens in churches. As the great majority of them belong to the Gothic period it will be most convenient to consider the class as a whole. These screens are used to divide the chancel from the body of the church, and obtain their name from the large crucifix (rood) which was almost universally placed above the screen; the rood was supported on a beam, hence called the rood-beam. At first the chancel seems to have been divided from the body of the church by a textile veil, later on by solid brick or stonework,* leaving only a comparatively small opening in the centre. About the thirteenth century this opening began to be increased in size and screens of wood were introduced to fill up the space. In Compton Church, Surrey, is a simple and graceful oak screen attributed to the twelfth century. It is composed of a series of small round arches resting upon slender turned columns with plain capitals and bases. At Stanton Harcourt, in Oxfordshire, is a thirteenth century specimen consisting of a single row of trefoil arches resting on turned columns and crowned by a slight cornice; below are plain panels pierced with quatrefoils.

The most usual model of the fully developed screen of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as found in Devon, consists of moulded standards or main mullions about three feet apart framed with a sill, and a transome rail about three feet six inches from the floor. Between the transome and sill are panels with traceried heads and, frequently, painted figure subjects. From the transome spring smaller mullions dividing the arch into three or four lights with openwork tracery above. Over all this, rich groining branches upwards and outwards carrying the beam and the loft, this latter having a width of about

* At Bradford-on-Avon church (eighth century) is an example of a solid stone screen.

six feet. In the Museum are portions of a late fifteenth century carved oak screen (No. 118—1865) said to be from a former palace of the bishops of Exeter (*see* Fig. 61). These portions consist of double doors in the centre and two side lights, without, however, any of the principal mullions or standards. At the Museum can also be seen two painted panels (Nos. 23, 24—1894) from an East Anglian screen of 15th century work, and a series of painted copies of details on screens at Ranworth and other places in Norfolk; also two pieces of late fifteenth century panelling (No. 1974—1900) with open-work Gothic tracery, which probably came from a screen.

At Holbeton, in Devon, is a very rich sixteenth century screen dating from post-Reformation times. This still shows Gothic art in its main features, but with a large admixture of Renaissance detail. In the Jacobean screen at Washfield, near Tiverton, dated 1624, Gothic art is entirely absent and the character of the work shows only Renaissance influence. At Croscombe Church, near Wells, is another magnificent Jacobean screen of about 1616. At Cruwys Morchard is an example of the Georgian period of coldly correct classicism.

The gables of houses were generally finished off with a species of narrow lining called a "barge" (more properly "verge") board, which was often carved with striking and effective ornament. The oldest existing example dates from the fourteenth century. They became more general in the next century, and were also common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the decoration was poorer in style.

Though the usual conveyance during the thirteenth century was a horse-litter for women of rank, whilst the men rode on horseback, yet covered and open carriages or wagons were not unknown in that and the following century. This appears from the fact narrated of the upsetting of a charette containing



FIG. 61.—PORTION OF OAK SCREEN, from a former palace of the Bishops of Exeter.
 ENGLISH; about 1480.
 (In the Museum, No. 118-1865.)



a number of maids of honour in attendance on Ann of Bohemia at her public reception in London in 1392 on the occasion of her marriage to Richard II. These charettes, cars, or wagons were covered carts on four wheels like country wagons of our day, panelled at the sides and with a tilt covered with leather, sometimes painted (see Fig 62).



FIG. 62.—COACH.

From the Luttrell Psalter, MS. of the 14th century. (In the British Museum.)

CHAPTER VI.

ENGLAND: RENAISSANCE. (TUDOR, ELIZABETHAN, AND JACOBEOAN PERIODS).

During a considerable part of the period when Gothic art predominated, a movement of the European mind had been in progress which profoundly influenced every branch of human activity among the western nations, eventually liberating them from the intellectual torpor and the ecclesiastical tyranny of mediævalism. To this great upheaval the name of Renaissance has been given, as it resembled a new birth. The beginnings of the movement may be obscurely and interruptedly traced far back, but it is first clearly recognisable during the fourteenth century in Italy, where it culminated in the latter part of the following century. Thence it spread to Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and, finally, to England. Its bent towards classical forms was determined by the abundance of classical remains and traditions in Italy, the intense yearning for liberty of which the free states of antiquity presented the highest ideal, and the revival of learning that was greatly stimulated by the teachers of Greek, who fled from Moslem fanaticism upon the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Renaissance art, though deeply tinged by classic Roman art, was not a slavish imitation of it. On the other hand, it was modified by elements of Gothic art, from which it was chiefly distinguished by a stronger insistence on symmetry and formal proportion, and by the adoption of the round arch, which almost completely superseded the pointed. It is a more sophisticated form of art and exhibited a tendency



FIG. 63.—OAK PANELLING. ENGLISH; early 16th century.
(In the Museum, No. 2011-1899.)



to conceal processes and structural means, which in Gothic art had been freely and very effectively displayed.

Tudor style denotes that particular modification of Renaissance mingling with Gothic art, which arose in England under the first four sovereigns of the house of Tudor, but more especially under Henry VIII. The development of this style under Elizabeth is called Elizabethan, and that under her successors until about the middle of the seventeenth century, Jacobean. By that time the original energy of the Renaissance was greatly spent and art began to be modified by new forces. There are few matters regarding art more worthy of consideration than the narrowness of the limits that bound human invention, or, to speak more exactly, the simplicity of the laws and principles guiding imagination in design. The return of painters, sculptors and architects to the old types of classical art, after the reign of the Gothic, illustrates what has just been said.

The revival of learning in Italy was accompanied by other circumstances that had a powerful influence on the arts and particularly on the sumptuary arts of the time. Potent among these was the gradual establishment of peace and the consequent growth of wealth. Formerly rich furniture consisted in a few costly objects and hangings, such as could be carried about on sumpter horses or in wagons, and with the addition of rough benches, tables and bedsteads could render gay and comfortable the bare walls of empty granges and manor houses seldom occupied. Churches were, indeed, generally respected in the furious contests which raged throughout Europe, for the violation of holy places was a crime held in abhorrence by all combatants, and so the treasuries and sacristies of churches were full of examples of every kind of artistic accomplishment.

Classical learning and splendid living were both encouraged

by Henry VIII. He is probably to be credited with the impulse given to the Court and the country towards the arts and attainments of Italy. The King had collected a great number of artists and artisans to work under the direction of Holbein, John of Padua and others on his splendid palace of Nonsuch, and many other artists, contemporaries of Raphael, found their way to England.

The new art began first to influence English ideas in the reign of Henry VII., but the old did not disappear for a considerable time, the period of transition lasting well into the sixteenth century. The extent to which the two styles fused varied considerably, proceeding more rapidly in centres of artistic movement like large towns, while in remoter districts works in Gothic style with scarcely any admixture of foreign elements continued to be produced for many years. Perhaps the earliest existing example of the mixed style is the so-called "Sudbury's Hutch," a coffer given to Louth Church, Lincolnshire, by a vicar of that name, and probably carved in 1487; it is decorated with portraits full of vigour and character, of the King and his Queen, Elizabeth of York. Striking examples of the transition may be studied in the stall-work of Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster (1506), in which only slight traces of the coming change are observable in the canopies; and in the choir-stalls of Christ Church in Hampshire (1528), where the proportions of Renaissance ornament and Gothic details are almost equal. The tomb of Henry VII. (d. 1509), at Westminster is almost purely Italian, being the work of Torrigiano.

In the Museum are various examples of this transition period, the most important being some oak panelling (No. 2011-1899), removed from a house at Waltham Abbey. It consists of 110 panels within slightly moulded framework, the lower edges of which are chamfered in each case. The

panels are carved with profile busts within circular medallions, Gothic arches, heraldic devices and other ornaments; the Tudor rose and portcullis and the pomegranate of Katharine of Aragon are repeated several times, as well as the arms of Blackett (ar. a chevron sa. between three mullets az.) and other charges not identified. It is supposed that this panelling (*see* Fig. 63), which was carved very early in the sixteenth century, formerly formed part of the decoration of the Abbey-house at Waltham. Other small series of unframed panels (Nos. 61 to 63—1890, 217 to 224—1898) exhibit the characteristic Tudor decoration of heads within wreaths or medallions. Another series of panelling (Nos. 504 to 510—1893) of different shape with pedimented top has similar heads together with other ornamentation; it came from an old house at Taunton in Somersetshire.

Two small half-columns (No. 153—1897) are charming specimens of oak carved with the hexagon and zigzag ornament so often seen in the chimneys of the time. A coffer (No. 833—1898) dating from the first half, and probably the first quarter, of the sixteenth century, shows Gothic influence in its construction, while the carved ornament is Renaissance. In the latter part of Henry VIII.'s reign, medallion heads had disappeared from coffer fronts, as from panel work generally, the space being more evenly occupied by flowing floral scrollwork. Carving by English workmen at this time seems to have lacked the delicacy of similar work by foreign artists, notably French and Italian, but frequently showed great strength and vigour. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods it became still more coarse and heavy.

Bedsteads in the olden time were frequently objects of great

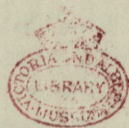
value and consideration, being richly decorated with carving and furnished with all the luxury at command. They are often mentioned in wills, sometimes by a special name, as "Clove," a bedstead left by Richard, Earl of Arundel, in 1392, to one of his sons; in this will there are no less than six beds detailed. There is in the Museum the end of a bedstead (No. 834—1898) of the Tudor period, decorated with "linen" panels, between two posts carved with Renaissance baluster ornament; on the top of one of them is an eagle, the symbol of St. John the Evangelist, and no doubt the other three posts were crowned by the symbols of the other evangelists. This was frequently done undoubtedly with the idea of protecting the sleeper from evil spirits. Sometimes angels and sacred personages were introduced, but these later degenerated into heathen gods and goddesses, satyrs or unmeaning figures. Tudor beds sometimes had testers supported on four posts; an example of these is preserved at Hedingham Castle, decorated in the transition style. The posts at the head were omitted in Elizabethan times, the tester being supported there by the panelling.

During the second quarter of the sixteenth century Renaissance art in England reached its highest and purest phase, and its most splendid monument in woodwork on a great scale is the stalls and screen in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge. The work is admirable alike for the beauty of the general design, the restrained richness of the ornamentation and the vigour yet delicacy of the carving. It was made between the years 1531 and 1535, but scarcely anything is known of the artists engaged on it; Holbein (b. 1497; d. 1543) may have been the designer, and the execution was very probably entrusted to foreign carvers under English direction. The wood—oak—was not polished but artificially darkened, probably at the time of its erection.



FIG. 64.—OAK PANEL. ENGLISH (?); first half of the 16th century.

(In the Museum, No. 1535-1855.)



In the Museum there is a beautiful piece of carving (No. 1585—1855) of this time, which shows strong French influence, if it is not actually French work. It is an oak panel carved in high relief with the bust of a warrior king within a circular medallion, round which are grouped in slighter relief crowned shields bearing the lions of England, floral scrolls and cartouches (*see* Fig. 64). The workmanship as well as the design so closely resemble the character of the carved ornament on the stalls of King's College, Cambridge, that the panel may certainly be attributed to the same period.

The English had by this time made considerable advance in the art of inlaying, their taste and skill being probably improved by their dexterity in needlework. Coffers of this period were sometimes decorated in front with elaborate architectural designs in inlaid work and known as "None-such," from the splendid palace which Henry VIII. had built near Ewell in Surrey. There is such a coffer (No. 342—1905), in the Museum. Another fine specimen of this kind of coffer was given to St. Mary Overie Church, now St. Saviour's Cathedral Church, Southwark, in 1556, by Sir Thomas Offley, Lord Mayor, and is still preserved there. Chests covered with leather and elaborately decorated with brass nail-heads seem to have been used at this time in rooms as well as for travelling. An example, which is said to have belonged to Queen Katherine Parr, is still in the possession of one of her descendants.

Chairs, which had formerly been exceedingly rare and important pieces of furniture, now began to become more common. In the first half of the sixteenth century they were very similar in design to French chairs of the time, specimens of which can be studied in the Museum. The curule-shaped

chair came again into fashion about 1530 ; it was sometimes made of walnut, with the front ornamentally carved ; the back curves had straight prolongations above, joined by leather bands to form the back, and the seat was also of leather. A specimen is preserved in York Cathedral and another in Winchester Cathedral ; this latter was used by Mary II. at her marriage with Philip of Spain in 1554. Chairs of turned work, sometimes called "thrown" chairs, came into use in bedrooms. This form of chair, said to have been of Byzantine origin and to have been introduced into England by the Normans, continued to be made till the end of the seventeenth century ; to this century the example in the Museum (No. 1529—'03) may probably be assigned.

Trestle tables continued to be in vogue till the middle of the sixteenth century, when framed tables superseded them. Two fine trestle tables of great size dating from the early years of the century, are preserved at Penshurst.

Specimens of Tudor painted decoration may be seen in the Museum in two panels (No. 46—1886) ; each panel is in three divisions filled in with stucco and painted in polychrome tempera, with baluster ornament, fruit and other details. They were formerly in Lincoln's Inn. The great roofs of halls were still constructed on Gothic lines, but admitted more and more Renaissance decoration. The roof of the great hall of Hampton Court Palace (1534-5) is an example.

Oak was the wood most generally used during this period, and indeed till 1660, but walnut was beginning slowly to come into favour. Cherry was another wood that was highly prized ; it becomes of a deep coffee colour with age. The terms wainscot and wainscotting from the Danish "*wagenschot*," the name for the best kind of oak, which came from

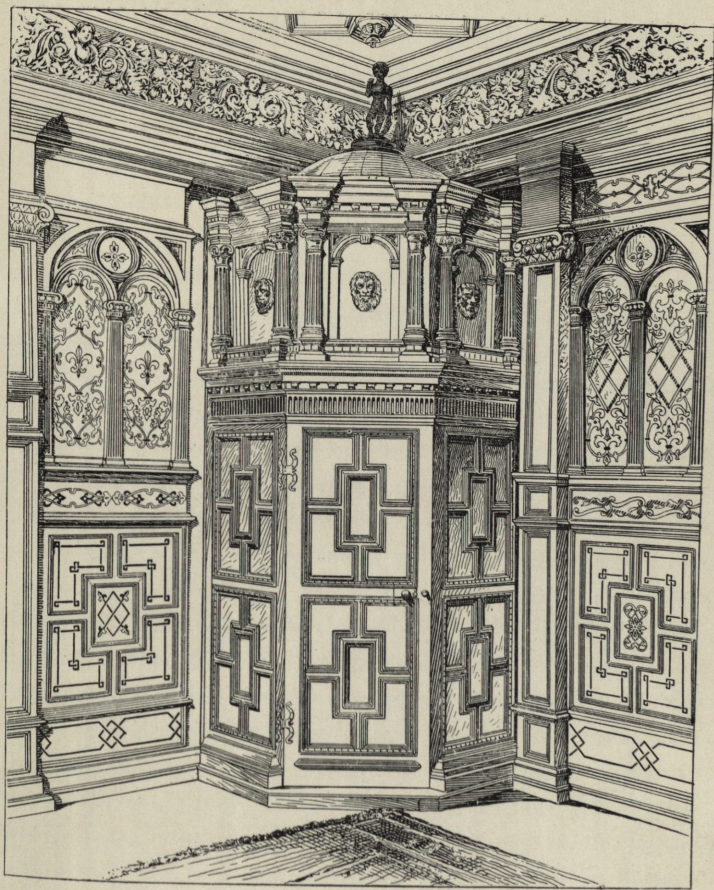


FIG. 66.—PORTION OF A PANELLED OAK ROOM, from Sizergh Castle. ENGLISH; date 1568.
(In the Museum, No. 3-1891.)



Denmark, were first applied to the timber and afterwards to the panelling made from it. Varnish does not appear to have been used in England before the middle of the sixteenth century, until which time wax polish or oil was probably the medium for treating wood surfaces.

ELIZABETHAN.

The various reigns sometimes supply more convenient dates than the beginning or end of a century, for marking changes in national tastes, in such matters as furniture. The names of kings or queens are frequently given to denote styles, whether of architecture, dress and personal ornaments, or utensils of the household. In England the reign of Elizabeth was pre-eminently a period during which the tastes, even the fancies, of the Queen were enthusiastically followed by her people, and under her influence a great advance in the refinement of domestic life took place. Moreover in the second half of the sixteenth century trade with foreign countries was extensively developed, great merchant companies being formed to open up traffic with the Levant, the Baltic and other parts of the world, and thus gradually a wealthy middle class arose, who fostered the arts devoted to domestic life. Italian taste, though not so pure as it had been a few years earlier, had become entirely fused with the older English style, and the result was a truly national phase of art, the Elizabethan, which if somewhat turgid and lacking at times in the sense of proportion, yet represented a feeling of domesticity hitherto absent in the architecture and furniture of this country. During this reign many Flemish and French Huguenots, chiefly workpeople, settled in England, and their work and influence helped to improve the skill and taste of native artisans.

The character of the woodwork throughout this period consists of architectural façades (or portions of them)—showy arrange-

ments, wherever possible, of the "five orders" or of pedimental fronts. Doorways and chimney-fronts were the principal opportunities in interiors for these compositions. Panelling remained in use in the great hall and most of the chambers of the house. The angles of the rooms, the cornices and spaces above the doors were fitted with groups of architectural mouldings, such as dentil, egg-and-tongue, and running moulds, and in some cases room walls were divided by regular columns. Heraldic decorations, with richly carved mantlings and quaint forms of scutcheons, the edges notched and rolled as if made of parchment scrolls, were a frequent form of ornament.

The style in art was quaint and grotesque, the figure sculpture heavy and of coarse though vigorous execution, being good enough to look well in the form of caryatid monsters, half human beings terminating in stands or acanthus foliations. Among the details of ornament appeared strapwork, curled and interlaced, fruit and foliage, cartouches, bulbous knobs, bold "nail-heads" and gadroons. The furniture became generally of unwieldy size and weight.

Inlaid work began to be used in room panelling as well as in furniture, but as a rule, with no great delicacy. There is in the Museum a fine specimen of inlaid panelling (No. 3—1891) in oak, which came from Sizergh Castle in Westmoreland (*see Frontispiece*). It is of strongly marked architectural character and is carved and inlaid with geometrical and floral designs in holly and bog oak. The door is inserted into a three-sided arrangement of the panelling, projecting into the room and surmounted by a dome (*see Fig. 66*). The whole is crowned by a frieze and a moulded ceiling, which are reproductions of the plaster originals. An interesting feature of this room



FIG. 67.—BEDSTEAD of carved oak, bearing the arms of the Courtenays of Devon.
 ENGLISH; dated 1593.

(In the Museum, No. 404-1890.)



is that the great bedstead is fitted into the panelling and forms a portion of the scheme of decoration, except that the inlay is of black and white composition. This mode of fixing state beds was a not uncommon practice at the time. The Sizergh bedstead bears the arms of Strickland, D'Eyncourt, Neville and Ward and the date 1568, when the whole work was executed. This splendid example of furnishing is from the purity of its design worthy to figure in the best period of English Renaissance.

It may be noted that as the vigour of the great sixteenth century movement decayed, the craze for making furniture on architectural models also began to die out, nor did it again come into fashion till the Gothic and other revivals at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The architectural idea was in itself full of grandeur, and it was productive of very beautiful results in the great chests or "cassoni," and in cabinets, although the façades of temples and the vaults and columns of triumphal arches do not admit of too accurate reduction to such small proportions. With the introduction of marquetry into more general use, one recognises not only a new or renewed method of decoration, but a changed ideal of construction. Boxes, chests, tables, cabinets, were conceived as such, and were made more convenient for use, and no longer sub-divided to suit architectural designs.

Another interesting series of panelling (Nos. 4870 to 4881—1856), which was probably made very late in Elizabeth's reign under Flemish influence, was acquired by the Museum from an old house at Exeter. It is of oak, and consists for the greater part of plain panels within framework decorated only with slight mouldings, which below each panel are replaced by a chamfer. In the upper row the panels are carved in low relief with charming scrollwork amid which are figure



FIG. 68.—OAK PANEL.
 ENGLISH; about 1600. (In the Museum. Nos. 4870 to 4881—1856.)

subjects, animals and other devices; the carvings exhibit delicate skill in design and execution, and are without the boldness and exuberance usually associated with Elizabethan work (*see* Fig. 68). Doors were fitted into the panelling and flanked by pilasters, the shafts of which are carved with acanthus or vine-scrolls and figures; similar pilasters were placed at the corners of the room; at the base of the panelling is a narrow skirting of strapwork. The birds' heads in the hinge-bands and other iron work should be noted.

The Museum possesses two great oak bedsteads, each—curiously enough—dated 1593, which are fine types of the work of the period. They both have panelled testers supported at the head by panelling and at the foot by posts, which stand clear of the actual bed; in one bedstead (No. 316—1867) these posts are of pseudo-classic form in the upper part, with Ionic capitals, and are surmounted by an architrave of classical outline; the lower part of each post is decorated with a gadrooned knop and rests on a deeply moulded pedestal. The head is composed of inlaid panels in deep moulded framework separated by pilasters. The carving is principally leaf-work, and the whole presents a fine and dignified appearance. The other bedstead (No. 404—

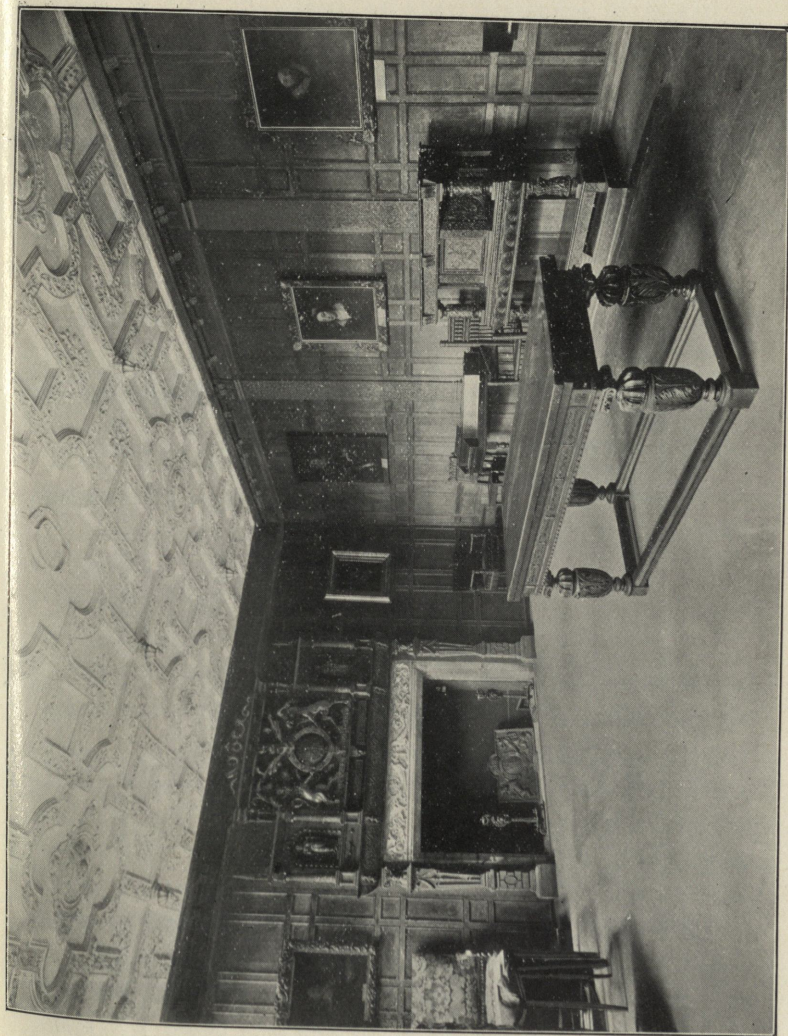


FIG. 69.—A ROOM from the "Old Palace" of Bromley-by-Bow, built in 1656.
 Reproduced from a photograph taken for "The Art Journal."
 (In the Museum, No. 248-1894.)



1890) bearing the arms of the Courtenays of Devon, is decorated in a bolder fashion with less strict adherence to classical ideas (*see* Fig. 67). Besides these complete bedsteads there is in the Museum a detached bedstead head (No. 791—1896) of very similar construction and decoration to that in No. 316—1867.

Another bedstead of this type, notable on account of its unusual size, known as the "Great Bed of Ware," is shown in Fig. 70. Underneath such bedsteads was sometimes introduced a smaller "truckle" or "trundle" bed on casters, which could be drawn out at need and was generally used by inferiors.

The manufacture of framed tables was commenced about this period; they were generally very massive with four great legs, often of exaggerated baluster form, connected by four heavy rails placed low down, sometimes actually on the floor; in the earlier examples these rails were T-shaped in section. In some cases tables rested on a solid base. A particular form of table could be lengthened by drawing out a piece at each end, and was hence known as a "drawing" table; the extra pieces were supported by long rails or brackets which slide out with them. A good example in the Museum (No. 384—1898) has carving and inlay on the frame and legs; the latter are of a bulbous form surmounted by Ionic capitals; the table dates from the end of this reign or the beginning of the next.

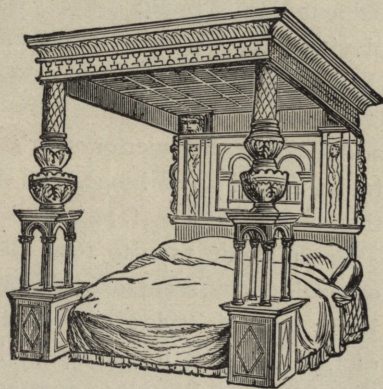


FIG. 70.—GREAT BED of Ware, at Rye House in Hertfordshire.

A very similar table is in the Charterhouse, which was founded in 1611. The Museum also contains another smaller and plainer specimen (No. 334—1907) with roughly-worked bulbous legs. Small tables were occasionally made for playing games such as chess and tric-trac (backgammon); the top, sometimes marked as a chess board, opened in two leaves supported on sliding bars, while below was a cupboard or drawer for chessmen or other games. Sometimes the tops of tables turned up on hinges, and in some cases the frame could then be used as a seat, as in Nos. 909—1907 and 265—1908.

From about 1570 to 1620, all seats, except the X-shaped or curule chairs, seem to have been designed with solid panelled backs, and this style of chair continued to be made till the end of the seventeenth century or beginning of the eighteenth. It is, however, difficult to arrange them in chronological order. The earlier chairs do not seem to have had the brackets, sometimes called "ears," projecting on either side of the top; their arms were flatter and straighter, their supports higher and their seats broader, and they were often inlaid, but these were not invariable features. Joint or "joyned" stools were throughout the seventeenth century in frequent use, especially in bedrooms, where they often served the purpose of small tables or stands; sometimes they were fitted with small coffers. In the Museum is the copy of a bench (No. 341—1891) of this period preserved at Sizergh Castle.

Furniture mounts, until the seventeenth century, were almost invariably of hammered iron, and their decoration was often a little earlier in style than that of the objects to which they were fitted, as fashions in ironwork moved more slowly than in wood.

Amongst smaller works of the time in the Museum, an oak pilaster (No. 225—1898), carved with a female terminal figure in Elizabethan costume, is noteworthy. So are also a male mask (No. 401—1890) in oak, from an old house in Oswestry;

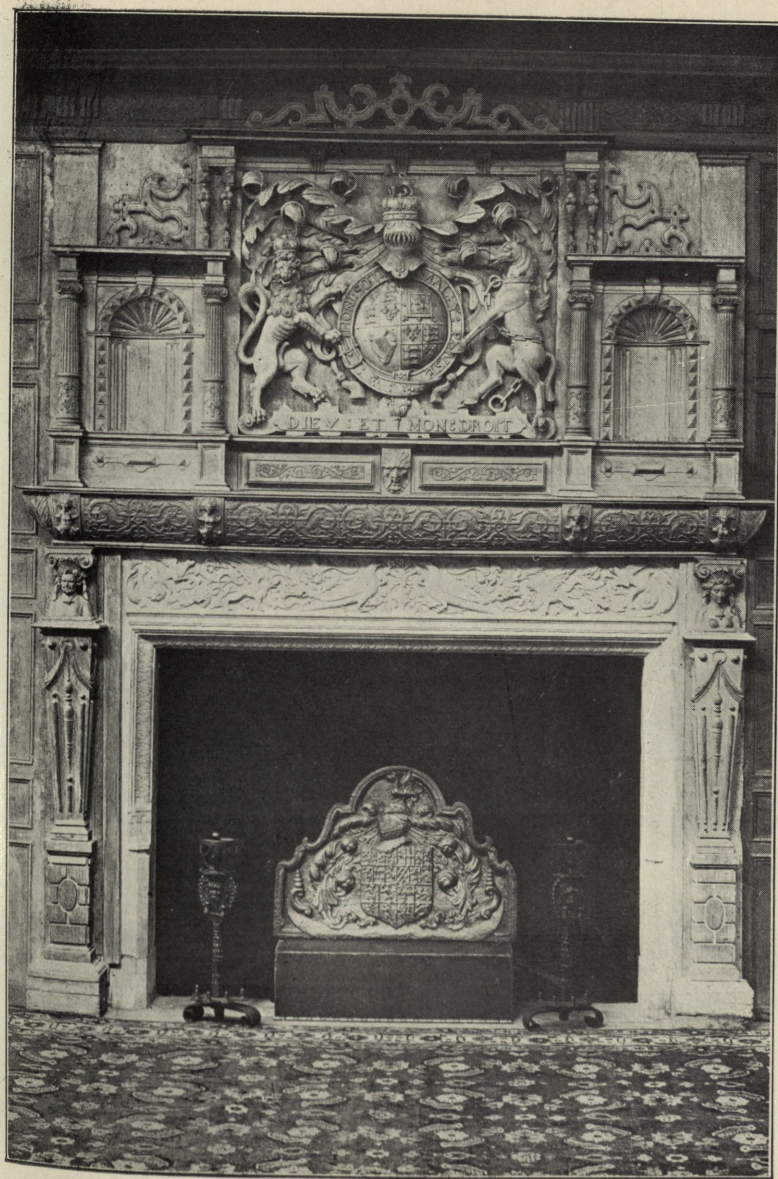


FIG. 71.—CHIMNEY-PIECE of carved stone and oak, from the "Old Palace" at Bromley-by-Bow, built in 1606.
(In the Museum, No. 248-1894.)



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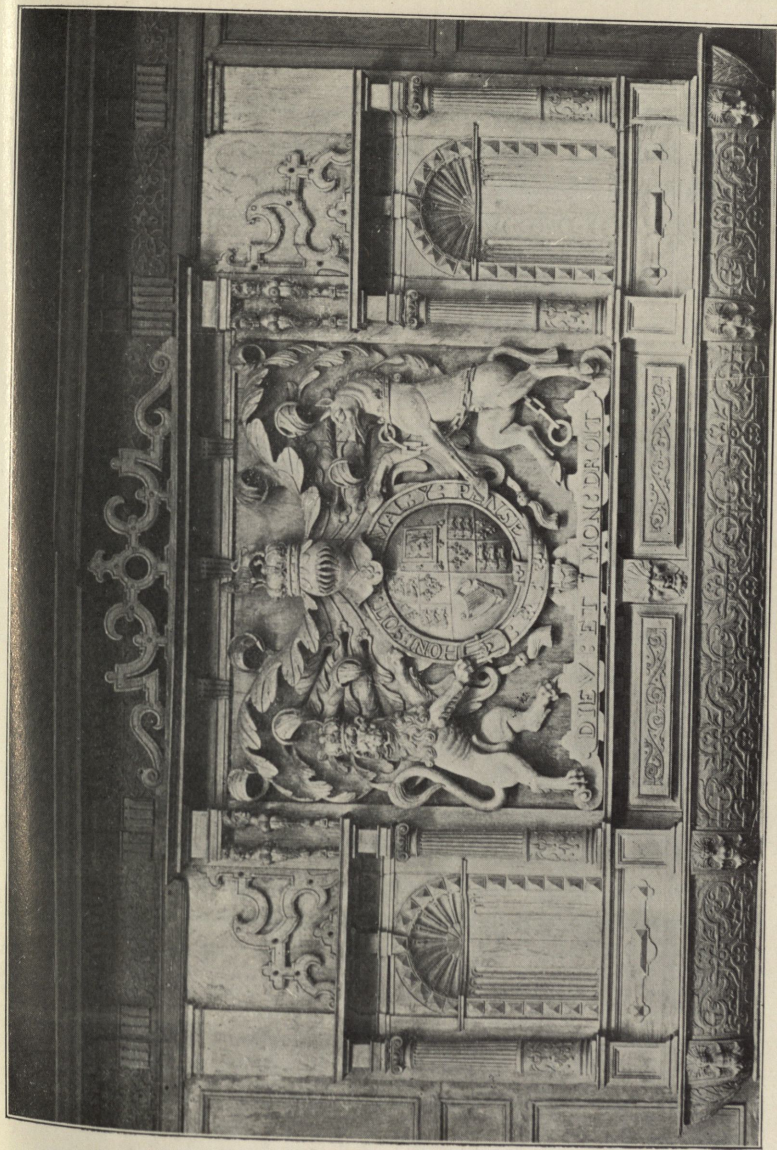


FIG. 72. —OVERMANTIL of carved oak, from the "Old Palace" at Bromley-by-Bow, built in 1566.
(In the Museum, No. 248-1394.)



a writing-desk (No. 97—1893) strengthened with long bands of iron, on a Jacobean stand; a beechen platter (No. 702^a—1891), such as were used at meals before pottery became common; and several sets of small painted roundels.* The last named dainty little objects are thin pieces of sycamore about five or six inches in diameter, painted on one side with “posies” and mottoes, or with texts, within borders of gaily coloured floral scrollwork and other ornament. They seem to have been used at the conclusions of meals, but in what way is not exactly known; two theories have been propounded, one that they were for sweetmeats or fruits, the other that they were used as a sort of game; in any case they were no doubt a source of amusement.

JACOBEOAN.

Art in furniture in the Jacobean period did not vary much from that of the preceding reign, but it showed less originality and became more formal. Designs grew flatter and the treatment of floral ornament more stiff and conventional. Another feature of the decoration was that ornaments were frequently applied and not cut out of the solid. The most prominent detail of the ornament was strapwork, and half-balusters or drops; “jewels” and bosses were also common. Geometrical arrangements of panelling, such as a lozenge-shaped panel within a square or rectangle, and especially a square or rectangle surrounded by four L-shaped panels frequently occur. Rich and costly hangings were used in great profusion, which tended to bring other decoration of furniture into less esteem.

The finest example of this period in the Museum is the panelling (No. 248—1894) from a room in the “Old Palace” of Bromley-by-Bow, (*see* Fig. 69), which was built in 1606.

* Nos. 6895, 6896—1860, 927—1864, 401—1878, and 333—1898.

Its chief glory is the fire-place with its oak overmantel (*see* Figs. 71, 72), in which considerable traces of architectural treatment appear; the strapwork decoration and the terminal figures are of remarkable beauty. The panelling itself consists of rows of small plain panels within a framework enriched only with slight mouldings; these mouldings, it should be noted, are not chamfered away on the lower edge but continued round each panel. The panelling is divided by pilasters which, as well as the frieze at the top, are decorated with strapwork. The Museum contains other specimens of terminal figures (671—1902 and 38 to 41—1905), but they are much coarser in design and execution than those mentioned above. Various detached columns, half columns and pilasters (Nos. 53, 54—1899, and 337—1876) illustrate the popularity of strapwork ornament.

In this period the name of Inigo Jones (b. 1572; d. 1651) stands out as the great architect who did so much to introduce the later Italian Renaissance or Palladian style into England, and though no woodwork can be attributed to him it is highly probable his influence largely accounts for the production of such works as the Bow Palace fire-place just described. There is in the Museum a limewood medallion (No. 467—1882) carved with his portrait in high relief.

A series of chimney-pieces (Nos. 1188 to 1195—1875) removed from an old house in Lime Street, City, are noteworthy as examples of dignified simplicity. The lintels and jambs of the fire-places are of stone, while the overmantels are of oak panelling, with mouldings and but little other ornament. Another specimen (No. 129—1907) has a finely carved stone lintel resting on stone jambs, within a carved oak framework somewhat similar to the Bow example.

From an old house in Great St. Helens in the City, built in 1646, two other important pieces of woodwork have been

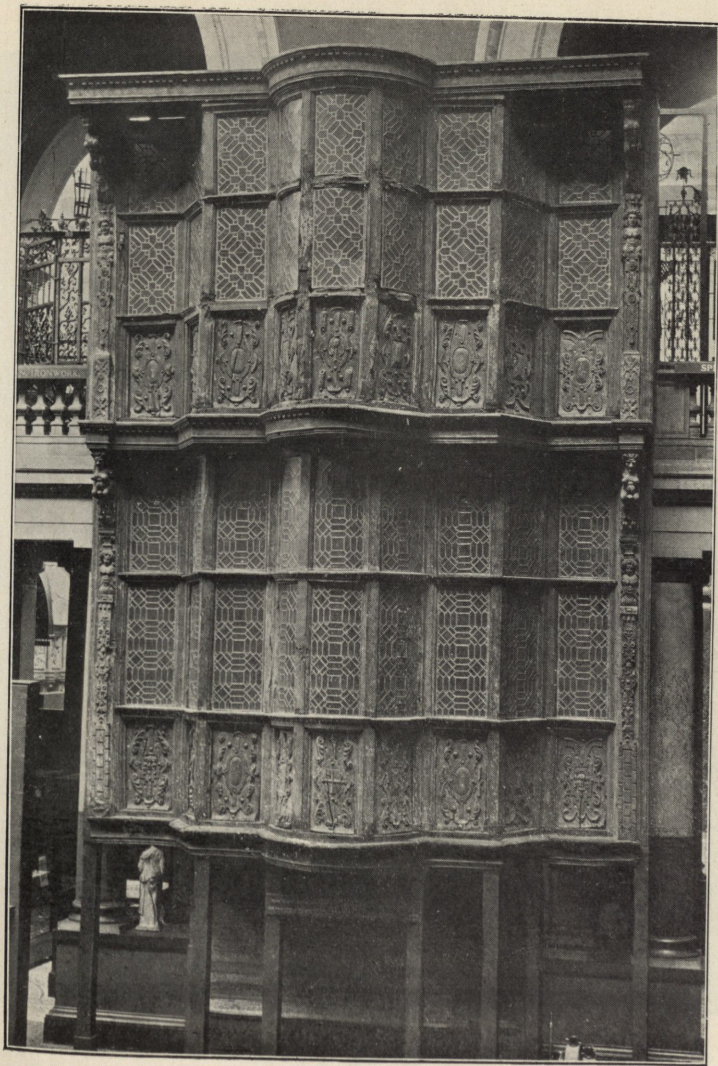


FIG. 73.—OAK FRONT of a house built in 1603 by Sir Paul Pindar, a London merchant.
(In the Museum, No. 846-1890.)





FIG. 74.—OAK PANEL, painted and gilt. ENGLISH; early 17th century.
(In the Museum, No. 404-1872.)



acquired, one a mantel-piece made of oak and pine, somewhat similar in style to those from Lime Street, and the other the balustrading of a stair-case. The latter (No. 154—1892) is a massive and imposing object, simply but effectively decorated with carving; on the newel posts are pendants of leaves, while on the square balusters, which rest on moulded beams more than a foot in depth, are Ionic capitals and scrolled cartouches ending in drops.

Ceilings in this and the previous period, when decorated, were generally of moulded plasterwork, as in the "Bow" room, but occasionally wood was used. There is in the Museum an interesting fragment of the latter kind of ceiling, consisting of an elm beam (No. 204—1900) of triangular section carved with a long inscription and the date 1638. Among other wood fixtures of houses are three panelled doors (Nos. 144 to 146—1892) with plain framework, the panels being decorated with applied devices, including strapwork.

Houses continued to be made of wood, each storey projecting slightly beyond the one below. The fronts were often profusely decorated; there is in the Museum a very handsome specimen (No. 846—1890) which came from a great City house, built in 1600 by Sir Paul Pindar, a wealthy and distinguished London merchant, who served his country as consul and ambassador. This front, which is only a portion of the original, is of oak, and consists of the framework of the bay windows on the first and second floors; round the bottom of each bay runs a row of panels carved in relief with strapwork, leaves and masks, whilst in the centre panel on the first floor are the arms of the City of London (*see* Fig. 73). Another very decorative piece of work of smaller size dating from the early years of this period is a panel (No. 404—1872) carved in relief, with a shield

of arms amid well arranged scrollwork, festoons of fruit and other ornament, and further enriched with colour (*see* Fig. 74).

Coffers of this period have sometimes solid, sometimes panelled fronts; if solid, the decoration is usually arranged in compartments with round-headed arches. The ornament is mostly flat, and consists of strapwork, or conventional floral work often in vases, as in the carved coffer No. 654—1894. Coffers Nos. 69—1893 and 634—1906 have inlaid designs. In panelled coffers the feet are formed by prolongations of the end stiles; in the other make of coffers the feet are added, being usually of turned work. The tops are not, as a rule, panelled but plain, with slightly moulded edges, and the sides also are without ornament. Coffer No. 527—1892, of which the whole of the front is carved with floral ornament, bears the inscription: "This is Esther Hobsonne chist 1637."

Various detached pieces of woodwork in the Museum illustrate the popularity at this period of decoration in the form of round-headed arches, as a small door (No. 597—1901) from a pulpit, and the end of a bedstead (No. 658—1902). Three chests (Nos. 299, 300, and 301—1878), of cypress wood with incised designs filled in with dark-coloured composition are of late 16th or early 17th century work. The method of ornamentation may be traced to Italy, and the wood, unusual in England, also points to that country as the place of origin of the chests; one of them with the Royal Stuart arms may be assigned to a date near that of an engraved wooden chalice (No. 275—1872), which also has the Stuart arms and the date 1620. Coffers of all the above types seem to have gone out of fashion after the middle of the century.

The Museum possesses a carved oak cabinet (No. 586—1897) which is a fine specimen of early Jacobean work (*see* Fig. 75).

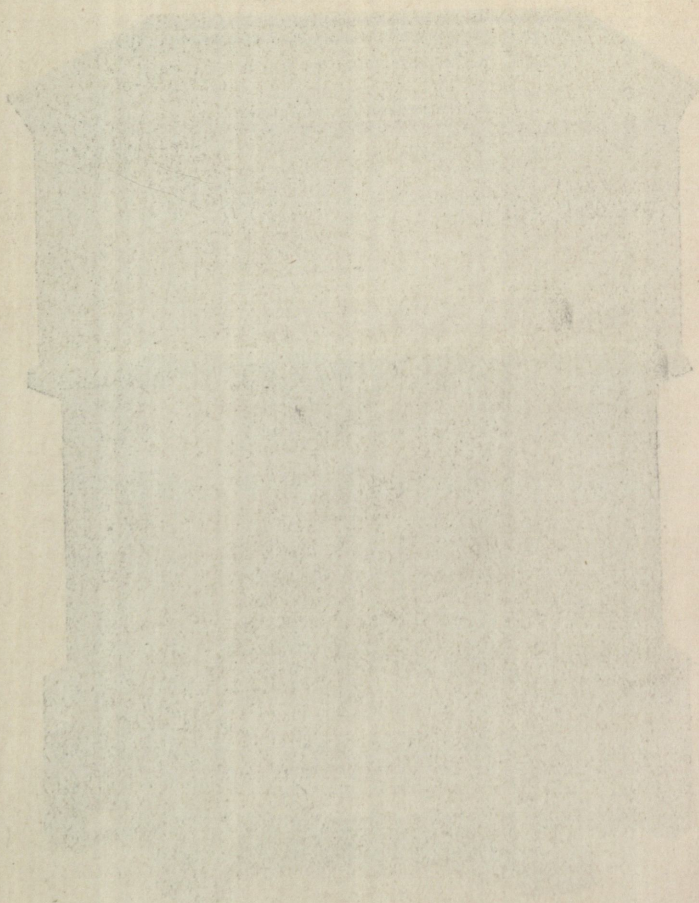


FIG. 75.—OAK CABINET. ENGLISH; early 17th century.
(In the Museum, No. 586-1897.)





FIG. 76. CREDENCE of oak. ENGLISH; early 17th century.
(In the Museum, No. 784-1907.)



It is in three stages, the lowest probably a later addition, and well illustrates the arrangement of L-shaped panels round a square, and the use of strapwork ornament. The beautiful balusters are of Elizabethan style, but on more delicate lines. Two smaller cabinets (Nos. 66, 68—1893) are of the same type but far inferior in merit; the columns supporting the overhanging cornice are represented in the latter by two pendant knobs. Another cabinet or cupboard (No. 4238—1856), also of oak, has two large doors with round beaded arches, the three stiles being in the form of terminal figures; this piece, which is further decorated with lions' masks, drops, "jewels" and other devices, suggests Flemish influence. Another form of cupboard, the "Court" cupboard, developed from the sideboard (credence, buffet) was used in olden times for the display of gold and silver plate. The specimen (No. 850—1892) in the Museum has a cupboard in the upper part, the sides of which recede from the door in the centre at an angle in a characteristic way. This is the case also to a certain extent in a small oak credence (No. 784—1907) of the time, as will be seen from its illustration in Fig. 76. A small oak sideboard (buffet), No. 410—1901, carved with flat interlacing strap ornament, dates probably from the middle of the century.

The massive framed tables of the previous period continued to be made for upwards of a hundred years, but the popularity of the "drawing" tables was of shorter duration. The exaggerated Elizabethan legs gave place to the ordinary baluster form. Smaller tables were not made in great numbers till after the Restoration, when tea, coffee and cocoa drinking came into vogue. A small half-round table (No. 425—1977), however, ornamented with strapwork, dates from the early part of the Jacobean period. The specimens, Nos. 71 to 75—1893, probably date from about the middle

of the century. They are all of oak, and furnished with flaps which are supported by hinged structures somewhat resembling gates; hence this form of table has received the name of "gate-legged." One has an oval top leaving a triangle when the three flaps are down, one an octagonal top folding in the centre, and another is a side table with a hinged top revealing a space when lifted.

The chair (No. 405—1890) shown in Fig. 77 is one of four carved with the arms of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who was created Earl in 1640 and executed in 1641; considerable additions appear to have been made in the backs. A lunette-shaped rail similar to the one under the seat of this chair, is seen in the back of chair No. 232—1898, shown in Fig. 78, which is of a type peculiar to Yorkshire and Derbyshire during the following quarter of a century; there are several specimens in the Museum. Another kind of about the same date made in Lancashire, has a low back of somewhat similar construction to the Wentworth chair. The arm-chair No. 230—1898, shown in Fig. 79, is, to judge by the turned legs and rails, probably also of this time. The Cromwellian chair, No. 428—1896, also of oak, has "Turkey-work" covering dated 1649 (*see* Fig. 80). Chair No. 94—1893, with seat and back covered with leather, is also of the same period. Another interesting chair (No. 96—1897) of walnut, with twisted arms, legs and rails, has arm supports carved in the form of female figures wearing the costume of about 1640. Twisted turnery work exemplified in several of the foregoing chairs came into fashion between 1635—1640, but received its chief development after the Restoration. It came to England from the Dutch, who apparently brought it from the East (*see* bench No. 2002—1899, and armchair No. 413—1882, both of ebony). Walnut, being less liable to chip than other woods was most used for this work.

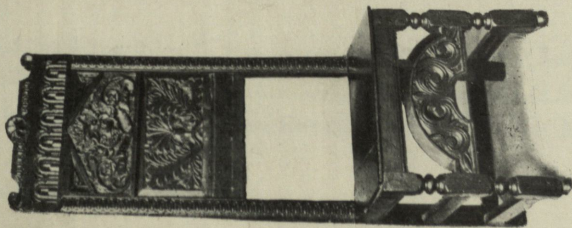


FIG. 77.—OAK CHAIR with arms of Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford. ENGLISH; about 1640 (Restored). (In the Museum, No. 405-1830.)

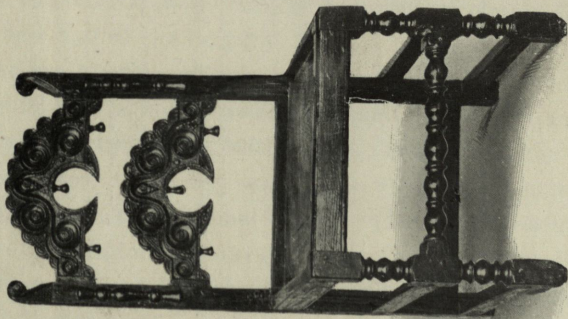


FIG. 78.—OAK CHAIR, Yorkshire and Derbyshire type. ENGLISH; middle of 17th century. (In the Museum, No. 232-1898.)

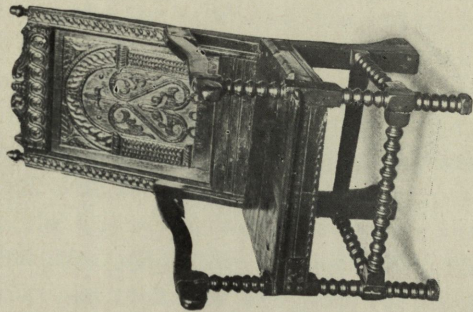


FIG. 79.—OAK ARM-CHAIR. ENGLISH; probably middle of 17th century. (In the Museum, No. 230-1898.)

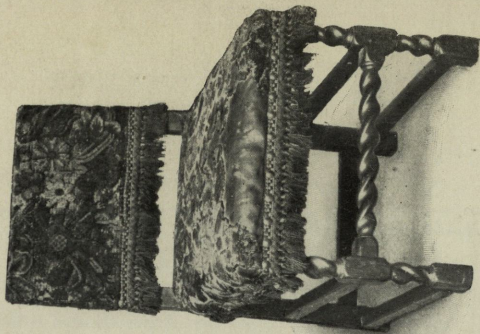


FIG. 80.—OAK CHAIR with "Turkey work" cover, dated 1649. ENGLISH. (In the Museum, No. 428-1896.)



Armchair No. 22—1883, is dated 1670, but is of the type introduced in Elizabeth's reign. Wide seats called settles, for two or more persons, have been used from early times, when they usually had high backs, solid panelled ends and frequently the bottom part arranged as coffers; later on the back became lower and the ends open. There are two settles of the seventeenth century in the Museum; one (No. 250—1886) is of the early part (but the carving on the back is modern), and the other (No. 262—1886), in which the seat is of coffer form, probably dates from the second half of the century. Two children's chairs may be mentioned here (Nos. 395—1905 and 397—1890), though the first is dated 1687 and the other is probably only a few years earlier. They are of oak with solid backs, and legs splayed widely for stability; the legs of the former have been shortened. Two oak cradles (Nos. 1769—1869 and 596—1886) are dated respectively 1641 and 1691, and two plain oak stools (Nos. 422, 423—1907) with turned supports, probably belong to the first half of the century.

Among smaller objects of the Jacobean period in the Museum may be noted two oak "Bible" boxes (Nos. 225—1897 and 427—1907) carved with scrolls; two oak "chip" carved boxes (Nos. 55—1853 and 433—1896) the latter dated 1648; two small pine panels (No. 1282—1900) with traces of painted decoration, from the Palace at Bromley-by-Bow; a small oak linen press (No. 532—1892) with applied ornament; and a panel (No. 1049—1898) from an oak stall-end carved with a lion rampant and the date 1623.

The civil troubles in the latter part of the time had a very disturbing effect on the production and decoration of furniture, and hastened the decay of Renaissance art, which had long been waning.

Furniture of the Cromwellian time is for the most part heavy and poor, but cabinet No. 657—1883 (*see* Fig. 81), dated 1653, is of considerable artistic merit. It is of oak inlaid with chestnut, ebony, ivory and mother-of-pearl, and shows in the decoration traces of Oriental ideas, probably through the Dutch, who after the victorious issue of their heroic struggle with Spain, were beginning to exercise great influence on the politics and art of England and other countries.

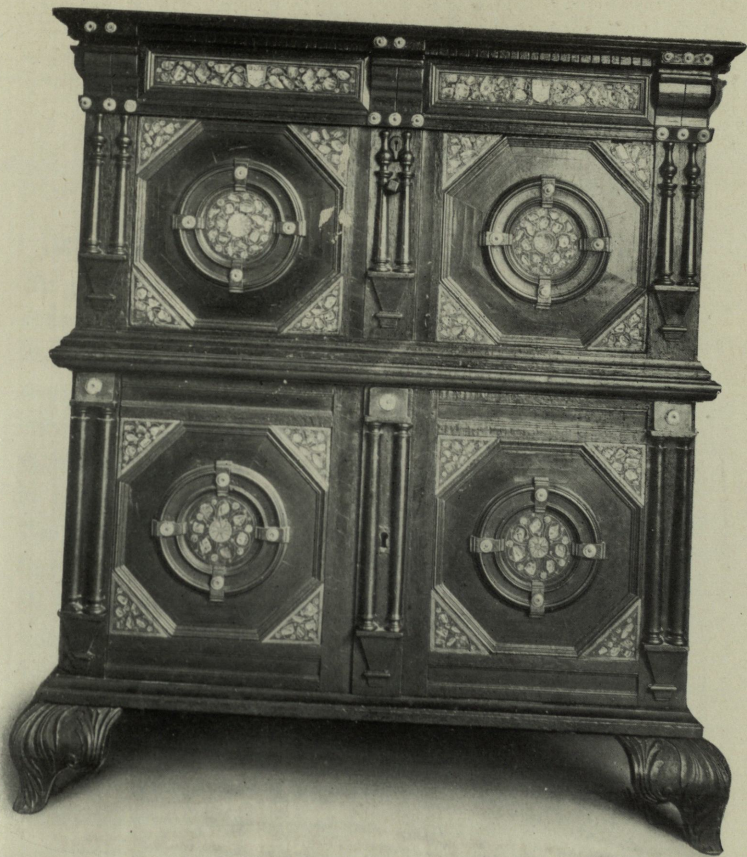


FIG. 81.—OAK CABINET inlaid with wood, ivory, and mother-of pearl. ENGLISH; dated 1653.
(In the Museum, No. 657-1883.)



CHAPTER VII.

ENGLAND : CAROLEAN PERIOD AND FIRST HALF OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

With the Restoration (1660) a great change came over the political and social condition of England, which was soon reflected in the furniture of the time. After the great sufferings and losses inflicted by the civil wars, which fell most heavily on the upper and wealthy classes, and the restraint exercised by the Puritan party upon all classes alike, the return of royalty was hailed with enthusiastic joy, which in too many cases degenerated into profligacy and license. The character of decoration became lighter and gayer, and furniture was made on slighter lines. Hitherto practically all furniture had been made of oak, and from the nature of the wood was gloomy in tone and almost necessarily massive in form. Walnut, the wood which now became fashionable, lent itself admirably to the change in the making of furniture, its closer grain admitting of more delicate carving and brighter polish. Another factor was the almost total disappearance of the architectural idea in designs. The aim of the best furniture makers now appears to have been to produce articles in which suitability and usefulness were the main considerations, and to exclude unnecessary and extraneous decoration. Cabinet-making and joinery reached in the ensuing period a very high degree of excellence, which was retained throughout the eighteenth century, and ample patronage was given to the skill, which rendered possible the production of the beautiful and delicate pieces of work made in such abundance during this period.

Oak furniture in the Jacobean style continued to be made, as has already been seen, but probably chiefly in the remoter parts of the country. Such are a dresser (No. 503—1898), probably made in the second half of the century, a “livery” cupboard (No. 424-1907) dated 1663, with a great number of small air-holes arranged in a floral pattern, and a cupboard (No. 928-1902), said to have been carved as a pendant to another cupboard, of which only a fragment (No. 929-1902) bearing the date 1694 is preserved in the Museum.

A marked feature of the period is the excellence and variety shown in the chairs, especially in the eighteenth century. Chair-making might indeed be looked on as the characteristic work of the time. It called out all the powers of the designer and the craftsman, and upon it were employed all the resources of their skill in construction and decoration.

During the reigns of Charles II. and James II. intercourse between the courts of England and France was of the closest nature, and French influence predominated, though from the first the taste of the Low Countries shared with it the domain of art. With the accession of William III. Dutch ideas came into ascendancy, until in the time of Queen Anne (1702-1715) a genuine English style was developed, marked by great beauty and purity. In the meantime architecture proceeded along classical lines as rendered by Italian and French architects, and by the genius of Sir Christopher Wren (b. 1632; d. 1723) was brought to as high a degree of excellence as such an exotic style could attain, but it never reached the intimate charm and national character of the Gothic. Wren was most ably assisted in his work by a carver of supreme ability, Grinling Gibbons (b. 1648; d. 1720 or 1721). He worked during the first part of his career chiefly in wood and displayed extraordinary skill in the naturalistic rendering of fruit,

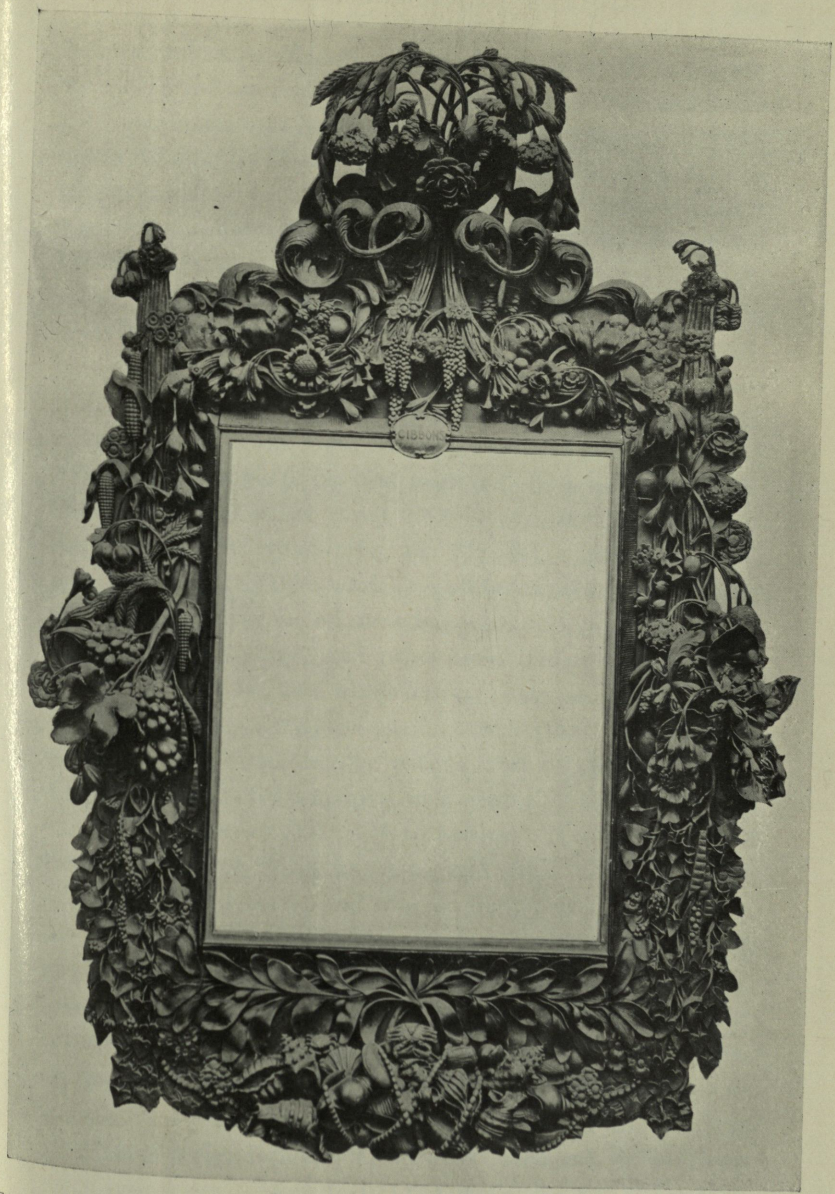


FIG. 82.—MIRROR FRAME of stained limewood. Attributed to Grinling Gibbons (b. 1648: d. 1720 or 1721.
(In the Museum, No. 1833-1869.)



flowers and other objects. These he introduced, in accordance with the taste of the time, in wreaths, swags and pendants, combined with richly modelled acanthus leaves, cherubs' heads (frequently in pairs), animals, figures and other devices. He carved them with the utmost delicacy and sureness, but it is often to be regretted that his marvellous skill was not guided by a finer taste.

One of his principal works in wood was the choir-stalls in Wren's masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral, and he contributed woodwork to many of the other London churches which Wren built after the Great Fire (1666). Gibbons was also employed in the royal palaces of Windsor, Whitehall and Kensington ; some of his best work is to be seen at Petworth, Chatsworth and other great houses. In the Museum is a large frame (No. 1833-1869, *see* Fig. 82), which is a characteristic example of his work. A profusion of natural objects, among which may be enumerated wheat, hops, maize, peas, beans, grapes, plums, and other fruit, poppies, roses, with acanthus, vine, ivy and other leaves, branches of laurel, and at the bottom a group of shells with strings of beads, are arranged in a broad border with a sort of pedimental top. Each detail in this astonishing mass of objects is rendered with the utmost delicacy and truth to nature. It is carved out of limewood, which from its close and even texture is well adapted for such work, and was frequently used by Gibbons, as well as pine and similar woods. Another considerable piece of work by his hand is a carving in limewood and lancewood, representing the stoning of St. Stephen (No. 446-1898) ; it measures six feet in height by four feet four inches in width. In the foreground is a large group of figures, including two on horseback, surrounding the dying saint ; behind are buildings of classical design that recall St. Paul's Cathedral, on which are more spectators. The effect of the whole, despite the number

of the figures and accessories, is thin and disappointing, and fails to do full credit to the labour and skill evidently bestowed on the work.

Two small groups of shells (No. 179-1897) in limewood are attributed to Gibbons, and two large pendants of flowers (No. 235-1889) from St. Mary Somerset (Somerhithe), built by Wren, in 1695, are also in his style.

Walpole mentions Watson as having been Gibbons' pupil and assistant at Chatsworth. Drevot, of Brussels, and Laurens, of Mechlin, were other pupils; the former did not survive him. His school had many followers, for the acanthus carvings on mouldings, and round doorways, chimney-pieces, and the like, executed in England with a masterly hand, are found as late as the middle of the eighteenth century. Specimens of such work, the fruits of the demolition of old London, which is continually in progress, have been acquired for the Museum. All the work is cut clean and sharp out of wood which admits of no tentative cuts, and requires no rubbing down with sand-paper, and in which errors are not to be repaired. Lengths of these mouldings were worked off by hand, evidently without hesitation and without mishap. Country houses abound with this fine though unpretending work, and give ample evidence of the existence of a school of skilled working carvers at the command of the architects of the day.

Several considerable pieces of architectural woodwork in the Museum show very clearly the classical taste in vogue from about 1675 to the end of the Queen Anne period. The richly carved upper portion of a portico (No. 489-1872) of pine, from an old house at Westminster, consists of two rounded arches terminating below in leafy bosses and surmounted by a classical architrave, above which is a band of openwork leafage, the whole being crowned by a projecting cornice; on each side is a similar arch. It probably dates from

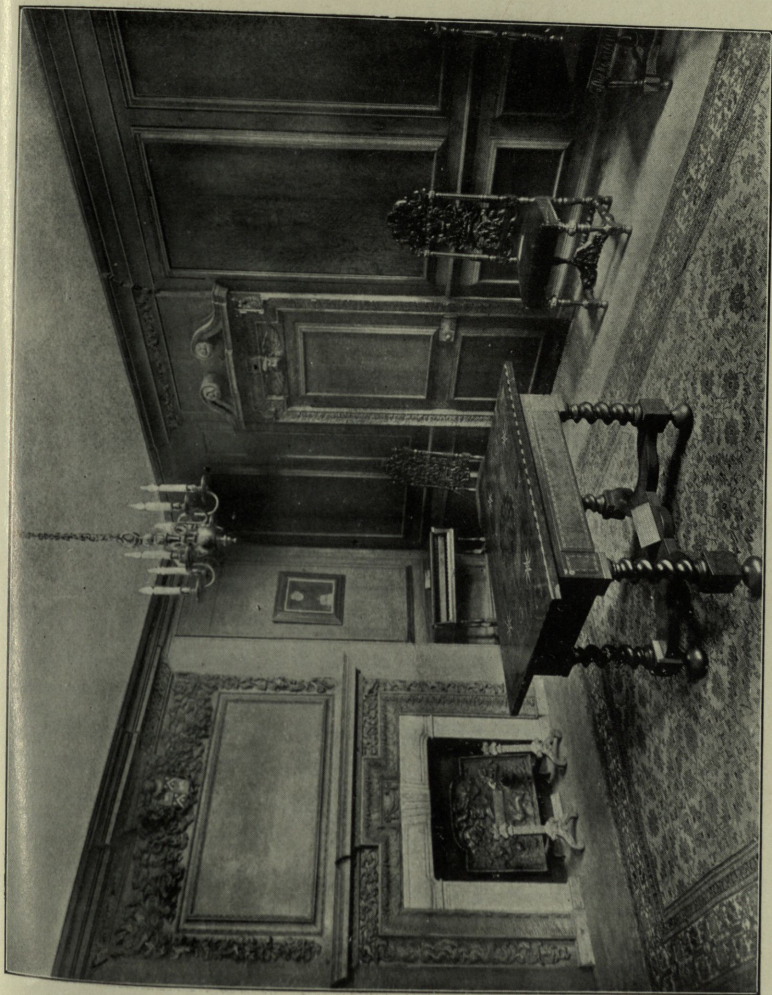


FIG. 83.—OAK PANELLED ROOM from No. 3, Clifford's Inn. About 1686.
 (In the Museum, No. 1029-1593.)



about the same time as a very splendid example of woodwork to which a closely approximate date can be assigned. This is the oak panelling (No. 1029—1903) of a room, which was formerly in 3, Clifford's Inn (*see* Fig. 83). It was prepared for a certain John Penhallow, who in 1686 rebuilt the chamber into which it was fitted, and lived there from 1688 till his death in 1716. The panels are plain and of the large size usual at the time, and are surrounded by bolelection * mouldings. The chief feature of the room is the mantelpiece, which is surmounted by a shield bearing the arms of Penhallow quartering Penwarin. This shield is placed in a broad band carved with a mass of flowering and leafy stems, fruit and other objects, executed in the style of Gibbons, and hanging down on either side of a blank oblong panel. These and some of the other carvings in the room are in cedar wood. Round the fireplace, the four handsome doorways and the cornice, are bands of acanthus leaves and mouldings with classical enrichments. The doorways are crowned by pediments, of which two are lunette-shaped and two broken and ending in large volutes. Two small heraldic panels (No. 153—1907) of pearwood and (No. 321—1907) of limewood, may be compared with the shield in this room. Two very large pine doorways (Nos. 1122, 1123—1884) removed from Nos. 31 and 34, Mark Lane, are probably of about the same date; the pediment of one is of broken lunette-shape terminating in volutes, somewhat like those in the Clifford's Inn room.

Two convex panels (No. 236—1889) of carved planewood are good specimens of late seventeenth century acanthus foliage, as are various pieces of balustrading, some of oak and some of pine (Nos. 703—1892, 363—1896, 662, 663—

* A kind of moulding which projects beyond the surface of the work it decorates. Called also bolelection.

1906). A considerable collection of turned balusters (Nos. 561 to 586—1901,) among which are some fine examples, are also of late seventeenth century work.

A porch (No. 358—1882), of pinewood, with fluted Corinthian columns of a good type supporting a lunette pediment in which is scrolled cartouche of characteristic Queen Anne type, came from a house, dated 1707, formerly in Great Ormond Street. Over the door is a semi-circular fan-light, such as is so often found in doorways of the eighteenth century. The glass of fan-lights was generally divided by rayed mouldings, which suggested the name. A mahogany frame (No. 311—1878) is very similar in shape to the cartouche in the porch just mentioned, and is probably not many years later in date.

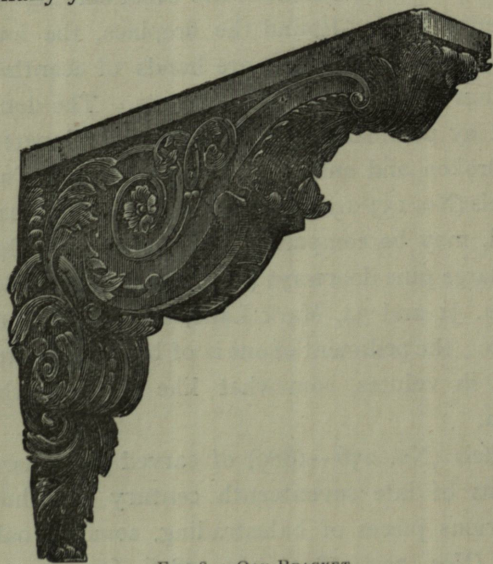


FIG. 84.—OAK BRACKET.
ENGLISH; late 17th or early 18th century.
(In the Museum, Nos. 71, 72—1864.)

Two other doorways, (No. 846—1868) of yellow deal from a house in Carey Street (*see* Fig. 85), and (No. 171, 174—1874), of pine with a triangular pediment, several portions of frieze and cornice (No. 705—1892) from an old house on Richmond Hill, and some Corinthian columns and pilasters and two brackets (Nos. 67

to 72—1864) from the chapel of Eton College, belong to the

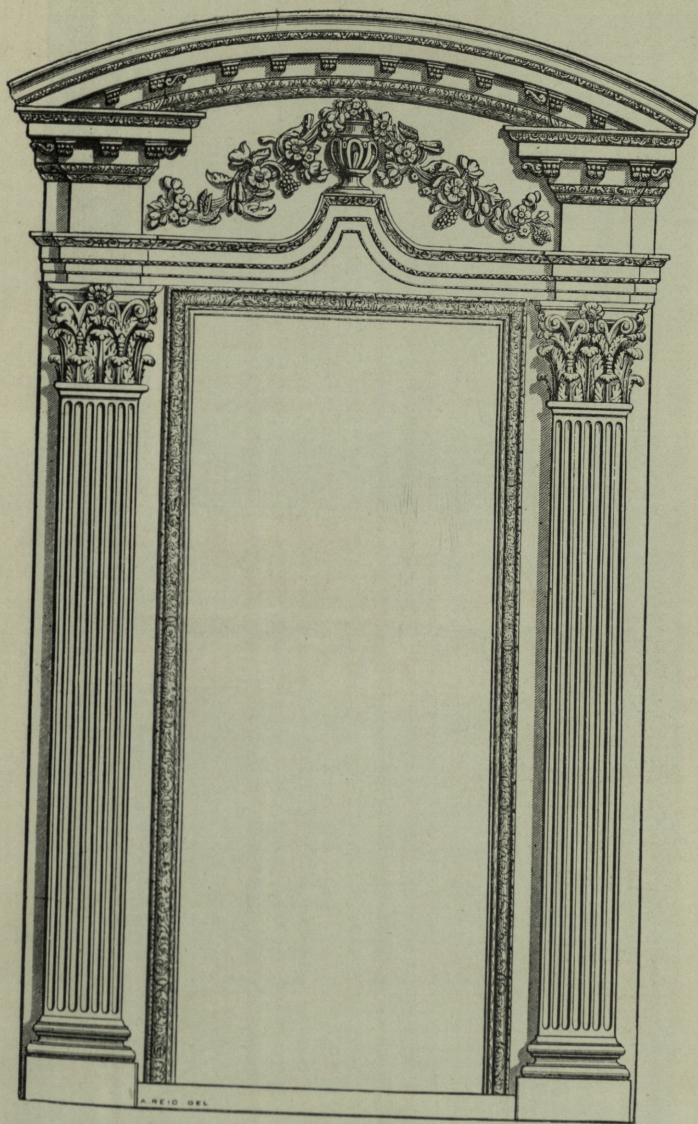


FIG. 85.—DOORWAY of carved pine, from a house in Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. ENGLISH; early 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 846-1868.)



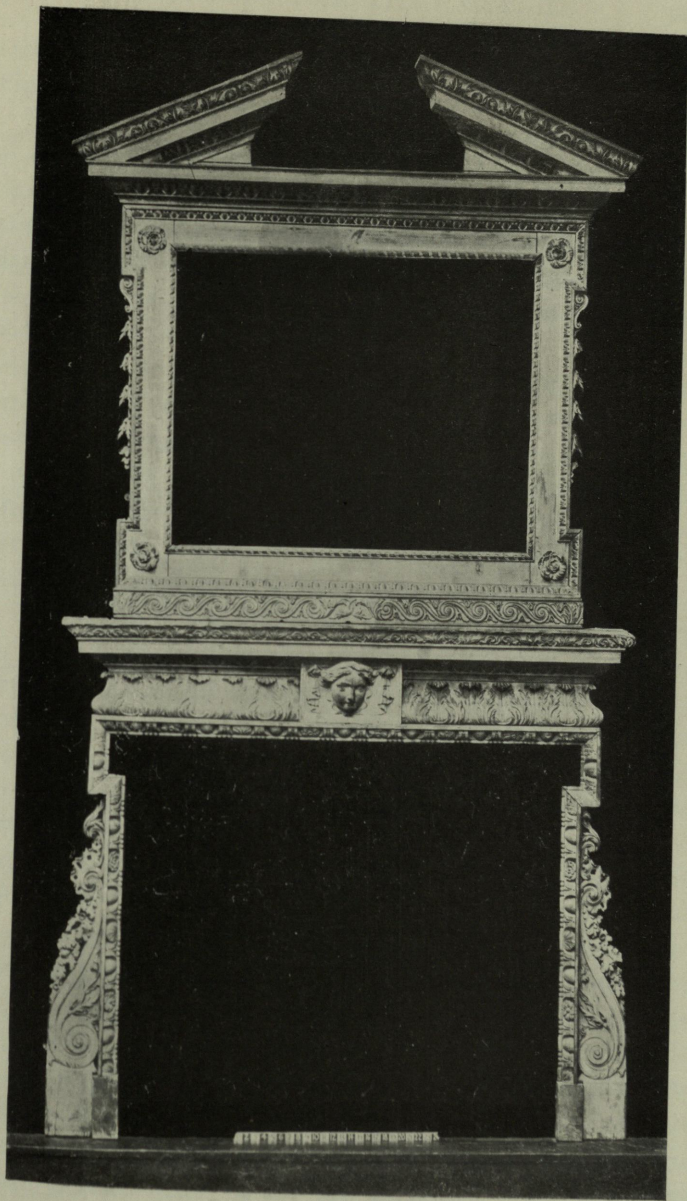


FIG. 86.—MANTELPIECE OF CARVED WOOD. From a house in Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. ENGLISH; first half of 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 328-1867.)



early eighteenth century; one of the brackets is shown in Fig. 84.

The Museum possesses several interesting chimney-pieces of eighteenth century work, almost all in pine carved with classical mouldings and enrichments. No. 445—1888, of pine-wood carved with two finely modelled female terminal figures on the jambs and a mask on the lintel surrounded by rays, suggests strong French influence and may be assigned to the early years of the century. Nos. 230—1894 and 419—1895 with convex frieze and No. 260—1894 with a frieze of ogee section, also a chimney-piece, No. 129—1894, and a carved pine moulding (No. 282—1898) formerly surrounding a fireplace are of about the same date. In the fine mantel-piece (No. 328—1867), shown on Fig. 86, are traces of rococo ornament which point to a date rather later in the century, probably 1720—1730.

A collection of small brackets, used as stair-ends (Nos. 589 to 595—1901) evidence the care and completeness of the fitting of houses at that time. About half of them are of pine, and the remainder of oak, all being carved with voluted bands, flowers and other ornaments; the majority belong to the early eighteenth century, while some three or four show rococo ornament and probably date from about the middle of that period. The chest of drawers seems to have developed from the old coffer by the gradual addition of drawers until the box with a lid finally disappeared and the chest of drawers was left as the result. An early specimen of this useful piece of furniture is to be seen in the Museum (No. 886—1900). In this example (*see* Fig. 88) which is made of oak and cedar, the drawer fronts have raised panels with bevelled edges; these somewhat suggest the panels in the Clifford's Inn room, and probably date from about the same period. The panels are decorated with mouldings

arranged in combinations of the square or oblong with quatre-foils. The ring drop-handles placed in the mouths of boldly modelled lions' masks are of later workmanship. In Fig. 89 is shown another chest of drawers of similar type.

An oak sideboard or table (No. 1054—1875) is probably of the same date or perhaps a few years earlier. It has three drawers separated by applied half-balusters or long drops. The fronts of the drawers are decorated with geometrical panels which in this case are sunk; the whole rests on five legs; the three front ones are turned, and they are all connected by plain rails.

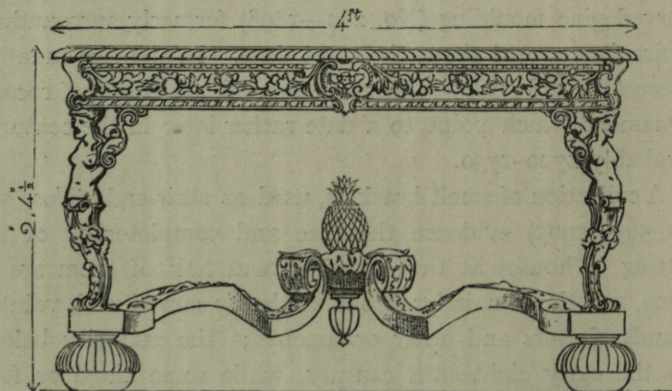


FIG. 87.—SILVER TABLE AT WINDSOR CASTLE.
ENGLISH; about 1700. (In the Museum is an electrotype copy, No. 1368—100.)

A walnut sideboard or cupboard (No. 5965—1859), dating from the latter part of the seventeenth century, appears to have been made under strong Flemish influence, if not actually by a Fleming. The upper part is recessed and at the back is a panel carved with a horseman; a somewhat similar figure is carved on each of the two doors below. The overhanging top is supported in front by four turned columns connected by rounded arches.

Evidence of the luxury and ostentation which prevailed



FIG. 83.—CHEST OF DRAWERS of oak and cedar. ENGLISH; second half of the 17th century.
(In the Museum, No. 836-1900.)



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FIG. 89.--OAK CHEST OF DRAWERS. ENGLISH; second half of the 17th century.
(The property of Mrs. M. L. McClure.)



during the latter part of Charles II.'s reign is afforded by the silver furniture which came into use about that time and continued till the early years of the eighteenth century. The taste for it appears to have come from the court of Louis XIV., and great numbers of objects were made, such as tables, chairs, frames, fire-dogs, candle-sconces and brackets. Nell Gwynne, the noted favourite of the Merry Monarch, had a silver bed. In the Museum is a collection of reproductions of several pieces preserved at Windsor, Knole and elsewhere, including a mirror-frame (No. '68—98) and table (No. '68—99) bearing the cypher of Charles II. and a table (*see* Fig. 87) with the arms of William III., which give an adequate impression of this phase of art furniture.

Japanning* was a form of decoration which came into vogue towards the end of the seventeenth century; it was introduced by the Dutch from the East, whence they derived so many other ideas. It, no doubt, came from Japan, as the name infers, but the process as practised in England was not nearly so elaborate, nor were the results so splendid and varied as in the land of its origin; the designs, executed in gilding, or sometimes yellow colour, on a black ground, consisted usually of "Chinese" scenes, and in some cases of sprigs of flowers. Two chairs and a settee which are dealt with later (*see* p. 118), illustrate the latter style, while the former appears in a cabinet, No. 1977—1899, which is South German work of the early part of the seventeenth century; a long bottom drawer and an outer case with two doors decorated with japanning were added to it about 1690, when the whole was placed on an openwork wood stand, boldly carved with children and cherubs' heads amid flowers, scrolls and shells. The lock plates and hinges on the outer

* *See* "A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing." By John Stalker, Oxford, 1688.

doors are good specimens of brass-work of the time. Another example of this style of decoration is a toilet glass (No. 661—1906), a charming object, which should be compared with a very similar toilet-table (No. 1111—1898) decorated with veneer. Each has an oblong mirror in a frame with a shaped top, hung between tapering posts, surmounted by knobs, which rest on a base with sloping fall-down lid like the secretaires of the time ; this lid when open reveals various drawers, while a lower drawer is divided into several compartments for toilet necessities. The veneered toilet-glass, which is of oak, walnut and pine overlaid with amboyna, kingwood and rosewood, is supported on a stand with four straight legs, bevelled on the inside. Both these objects are of the Queen Anne period.

Another fine specimen of veneered furniture is a chest of drawers (No. 1114—1898) of pine and oak overlaid with walnut in small roundish pieces cut across the grain and arranged to form a kind of pattern (*see* Fig. 90). This, like the other chest of drawers (No. 886—1900) already mentioned (*see* p. 105) is in two parts, the lower containing one drawer and forming a sort of stand with twisted legs, which appear to date from the end of the seventeenth century rather than the beginning of the eighteenth. The base is cut with a very graceful lower edge. The Museum possesses two other chests of drawers of this type, (Nos. 249—1898, and 1113—1898), but without the twisted columns ; also a lace-box (No. 430—1907) with walnut overlay, and a treasure chest (No. 793—1896) of oak veneered with *lignum vitæ* cut across the grain. The latter is decorated with scrolled brass hinges, angle-pieces and strengthening bands and has a spring lock ; each end is pierced vertically with a hole for a screw by which the chest could be secured against removal.

Marquetry began to come into favour about 1675–1680.



FIG. 90.—CHEST OF DRAWERS veneered with walnut. ENGLISH; late 17th century.
(In the Museum, No. 1114-1898.)



At first the chief motives in design appear to have been acanthus leaves, figures and arabesques under Italian and French influence; a little later designs of flowers and birds treated in a more realistic fashion were introduced by the Dutch. Finally, about 1700, these two styles passed into an English style with very delicate leafwork of conventional form often intricately mingled with scrolls and strapwork; one form of leafwork is suggestive of seaweed, and geometrical designs were also used. A cabinet (No. 157—1889), made probably about 1680—1685, has two large doors in the upper portion, each inlaid with an elaborate design of figures and arabesques, which bears strong impress of foreign, probably French, influence. The lower part is a chest of drawers with inlaid floral ornament arranged in panels on the drawer fronts. The whole is crowned with a bold cornice and lunette pediment.

The Dutch style of inlay is clearly seen in a tall-case clock, No. 331—1878 (*see* Fig. 93); this fine specimen, the dial plate of which bears the name of Mansell Bennett, was probably made about 1690. Tall-case or "grandfather" clocks were introduced about the middle of the seventeenth century and were a development of the bracket clock with wooden hood; they originated in a desire to hide the weights and pendulum. Two other inlaid cases (Nos. 4618—1858, and 225—1879), shown in Figs. 91 and 92 display the more purely English style of marquetry, and date from a few years before, or more probably after 1700. The former is by Henry Poisson, who is known to have worked in London from 1695 to 1720.

Cabinet No. 4619—1858 of walnut (*see* Fig. 94), which unfortunately lacks its stand, is a very beautiful piece of work illustrating the so-called "seaweed" leafwork. The inlay is of white wood, probably holly. A chest of drawers (No. 153—1893) of oak veneered with walnut and inlaid with floral designs in sycamore, as well as the cabinet

(No. 4619—1858) show the compartments with semi-circular ends which appear in clock No. 331—1878. Table No. 4620—1858, of pine with marquetry of *lignum vitæ*, amboyna, rose-wood, sycamore, ebony, ivory, and composition, is an elaborate specimen of geometrical design. All these examples date from about 1700. Among small objects showing this form of decoration should be noted a lace-box (No. 429—1907) ornamented with scrolling leafwork, and a backgammon board (No. 530—1897), bearing on the outside of each half an interlacing device of two G's and two K's, the monogram of the celebrated Count de Grammont, author of the *Memoirs*, and Miss Mary Kirk, maid of honour of the Queen of Charles II. This was made at Tunbridge Wells, where a particular kind of marquetry known as "Tunbridge ware" was and still is practised, though the industry has almost died out. It consists of a mosaic work in coloured woods, generally of very minute and delicate character; thin strips of various woods are glued together so that the ends form a pattern; narrow transverse sections are then cut off and applied to the object to be decorated. A very similar form of ornamentation is made at Bombay, where it was introduced from Shiraz in Persia. A dainty coffret (No. 1044—1882), bound with brass and decorated with representations of an *al fresco* musical party and other scenes in marquetry of various coloured woods, dates from about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Among miscellaneous works in the Museum belonging to the latter part of the seventeenth century may be mentioned the octagonal oak sounding board (No. 848—1905) of a pulpit with a gilt mask between scrolls in relief on each face; a panel (No. 532—1901 in a modern frame), painted with the Lord's Prayer; an oak panel (No. 533—1901) painted with the Royal Stuart arms of England surmounted by the crowned

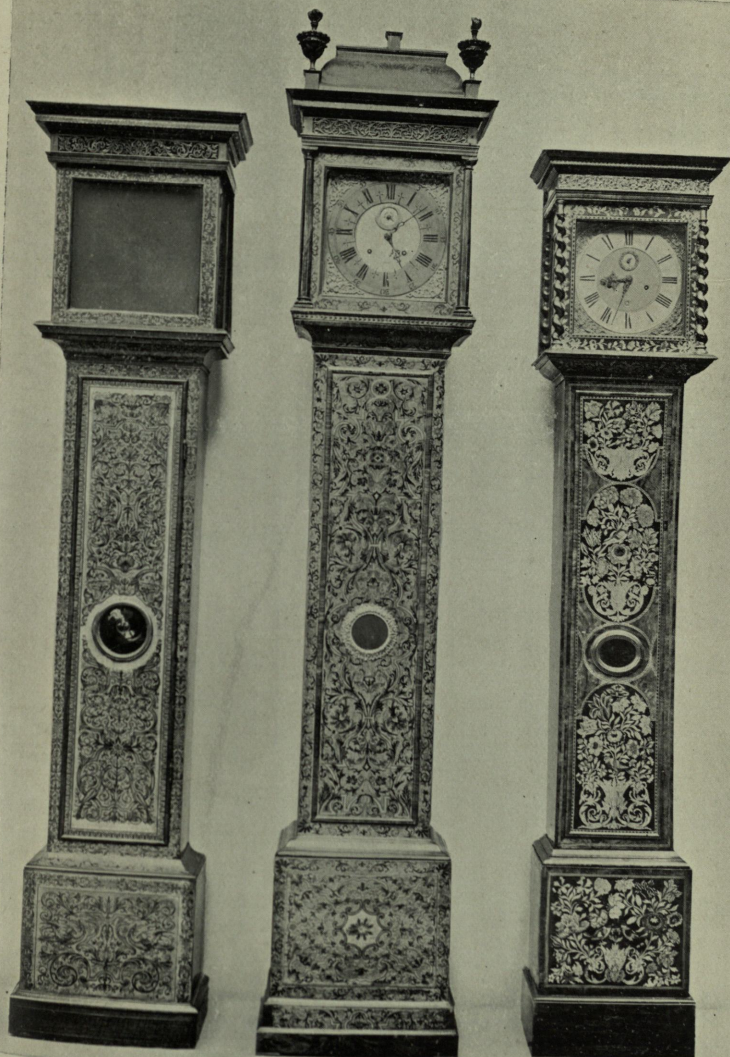
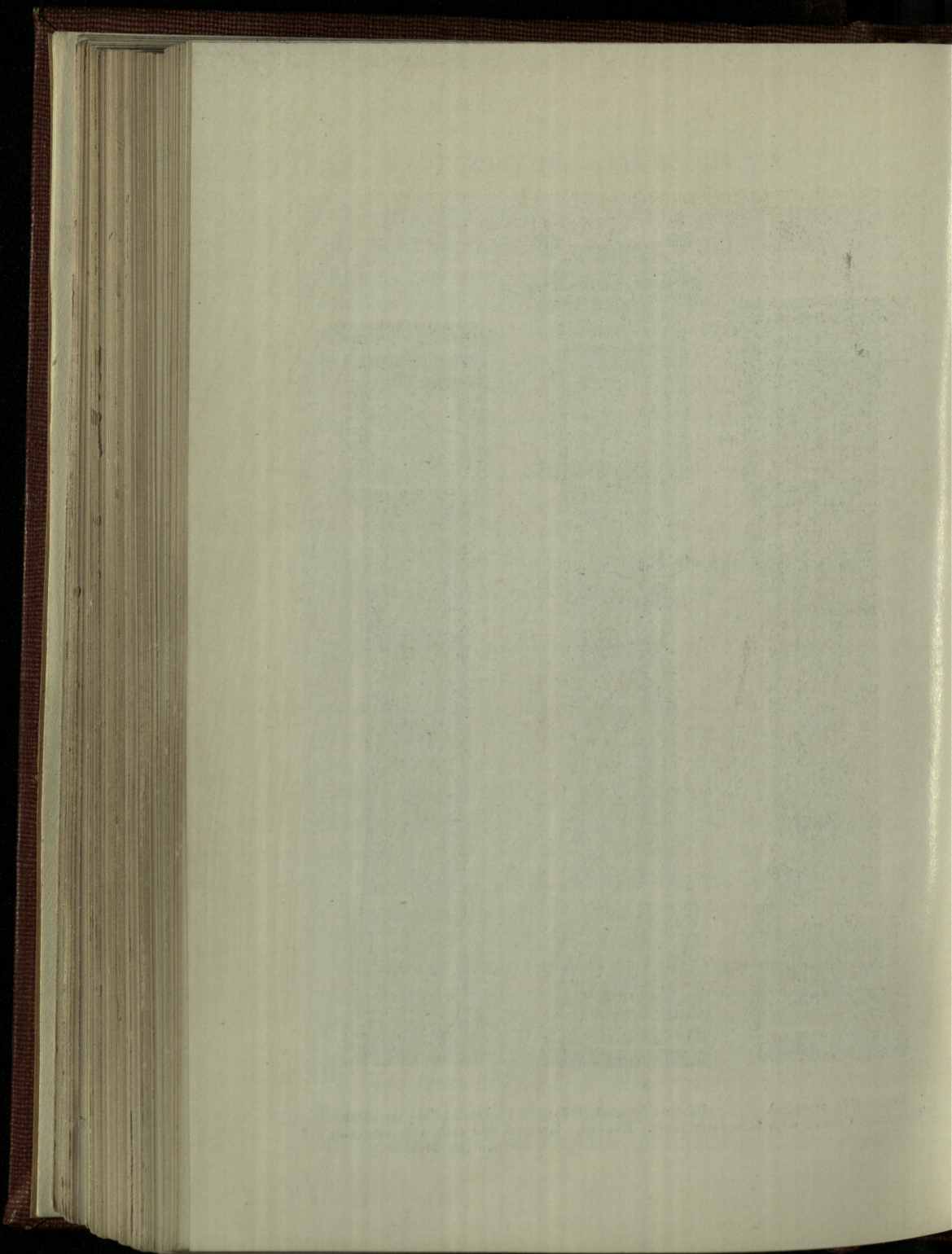


FIG. 91 (No. 225-1379).

FIG. 92 (No. 4618-1858).

FIG. 93 (No. 331-1878).

TALL-CASE CLOCKS with Marquetry cases. ENGLISH; late 17th and early 18th centuries.
(In the Museum.)



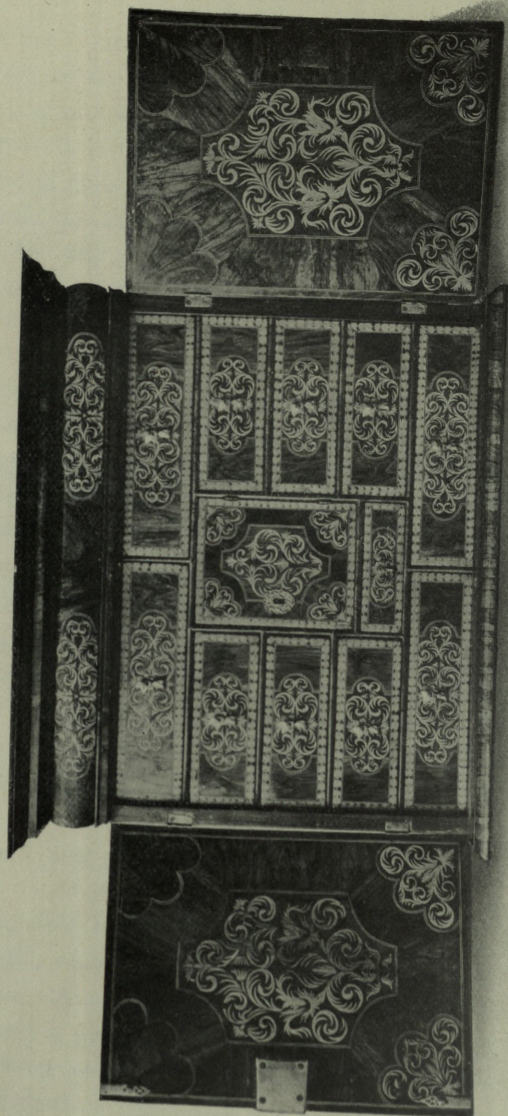


FIG. 94.--CABINET with marquetry decoration. ENGLISH; about 1700.
(In the Museum, No. 4619-1858.)

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letters C (arolus) R (ex) II.; a carving in wood (No. 262—1879) of the arms of the corporation of the Trinity House, dating probably about 1670; a wooden travelling chest (No. 497—1894) covered with brown leather studded with brass-headed nails forming patterns of scrolls and rosettes, among which is the monogram of William III. and Mary II. on the top; and a large wassail bowl (No. 215—1906) of *lignum vitæ* with engine-turned decoration.

State beds continued to be constructed with high corner posts and decorated with heavy hangings. They sometimes had hearse-like plumes above the tester, as in the example shown in Fig. 95, which is of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century work. Some bedsteads were without high corner posts as may be seen in a mahogany bedstead (No. 1120—1901), of Chippendale's first period, in the Museum. It has a pediment-shaped head outlined by curves and decorated with a wavy border of leaves and flowers, and at the foot are two short posts curiously shaped; the upper portion of each post is of cabriole form while the lower terminates in a cabriole leg with claw and ball, the whole presenting the shape of a bow. A mahogany chest (No. 1392—1904) with hinged lid and a drawer below belongs to the same period; it is decorated with a carved shell under the drawer, and the whole rests on short cabriole legs with feet in the shape of animals' paws. A round-topped mahogany table (No. 214—1885) with shaped raised edge, supported on a single

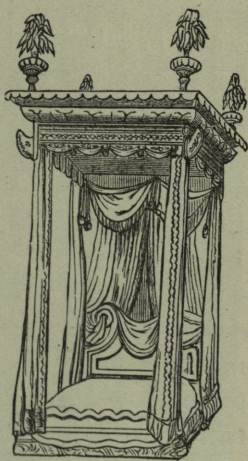


FIG. 95.—STATE BED,
at Hampton Court Palace.

turned stem resting on a tripod carved with claw and ball feet, and a mahogany screen (No. 441—1902), which has a tripod support, with snakes' head feet, are of the same time; the screen is fitted with embroidery in silk and wool. Somewhat earlier than the above are a handsome carved walnut card-table (No. 223—1904) and a mahogany table (No. 435—1907) with a sunk top; both have cabriole legs decorated with palmette ornament and terminating at the bottom in claw and ball feet. A small toilet-table (No. 76—1893) in oak with four cabriole legs ending in hoof feet, is of the same date as these tables; it has been carved at some later period with ornament in the style of the seventeenth century. Two objects of the Queen Anne period may be mentioned here, a pair of turned walnut candlesticks (No. 66—1905) with silver mounts, and a large panel (No. 344—1880) carved with the royal arms and enriched with gilding, probably from some provincial town-hall or church. A nest of three small mahogany tables (No. 433—1907), each resting on two broad vase-shaped supports was perhaps made in the first half of the century. A mahogany table (No. 434—1907) with square legs and angle brackets belongs to the middle of the century; it has an unusual top composed of three flaps resting on each other.

Mirrors or looking-glasses which spread through Europe in the seventeenth century formed an important addition to household furniture. They were not common in England till after 1660, but before that date small mirrors in olive-wood frames had been imported from Italy. After the Restoration glass works were started at Vauxhall by the second Duke of Buckingham (d. 1688) with Venetian workmen; Vauxhall became celebrated, as Evelyn informs us, for "looking-glasses far larger and better than any that came from Venice" and mirrors attained great popularity

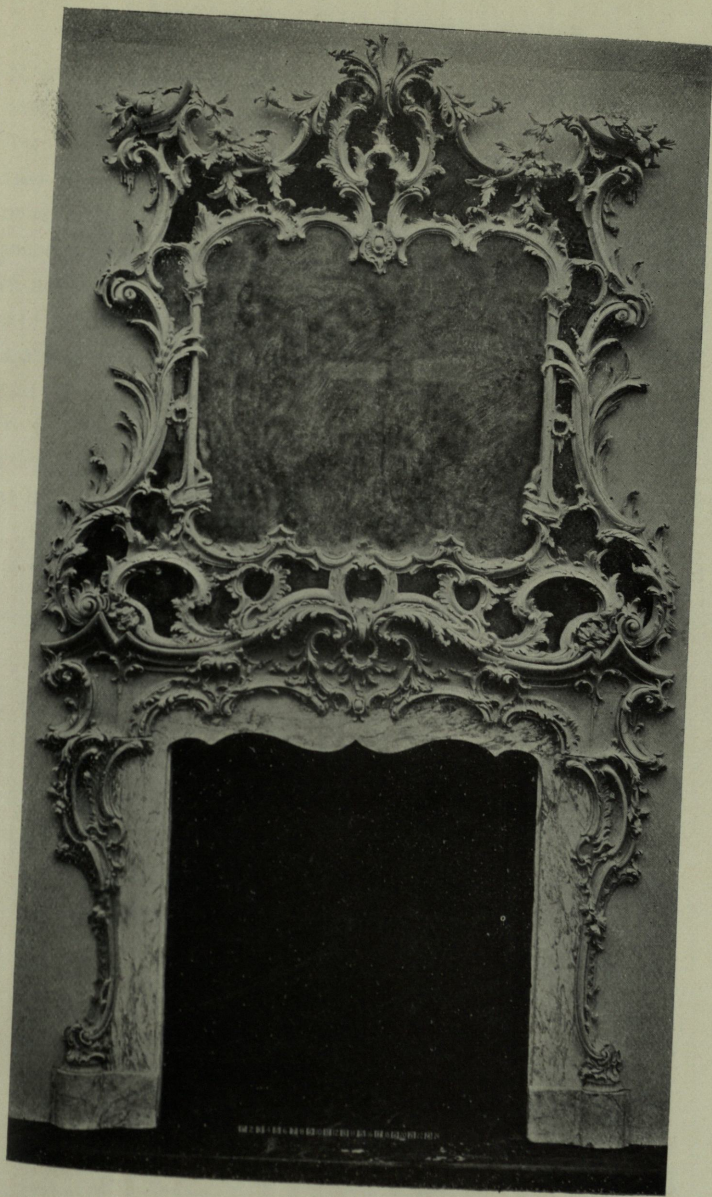


FIG. 96.—MANTELPIECE of carved pine. Attributed to Chippendale.
ENGLISH; middle of 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 738-1897.)



It was a long time before very large sheets could be made ; consequently, when mirrors were required of more than about four feet in greatest measurement they were composed of two or more pieces, the joints being often concealed by wood mouldings. A striking example of this is a large chimney-piece (No. 738—1897), the upper part of which is a mirror in a pinewood frame carved in the florid *rococo* style which was introduced a little before the middle of the eighteenth century (see Fig. 96). It is attributed to T. Chippendale, and the object seems sufficiently vigorous and important to justify the attribution. Two other large mirrors (Nos. 2387, 2388—1855), in carved and gilt frames are also assigned to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAIRS (CAROLEAN PERIOD TO BEGINNING OF NINETEENTH CENTURY).

It will be convenient at this point to consider the chairs and other seats made all through the period from the latter part of the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In the reign of Charles II. and till the end of the seventeenth century chairs with cane-work in the backs and cane or rush seats seem to have been very general. Arm-chair, No. 655—1894, may be described as a type of the usual form. The back is composed of a central upright panel of cane-work between two slats carved and pierced with acanthus leafage of no great delicacy; this is enclosed by rails at the top and bottom decorated with leafwork, which are tenoned into two uprights continuous with the back legs. The seat was made for cane-work, which has been replaced by a board; the uprights of the back and the legs and rails are of the twisted turned work which began to come into favour a little before the middle of the century, and the chair was probably made not many years after the Restoration, when turned work partook of the general movement towards lightness and became more slender and graceful.

Day-beds, called also sophas (sofas) were introduced from the East, as is evidenced by the second name, early in the seventeenth century. There is one in the Museum (No. 409—1901) of oak and walnut, whose twisted rails mark the style of the middle of Charles II.'s reign. Towards the end of his reign and in that of his successor chairs were frequently decorated

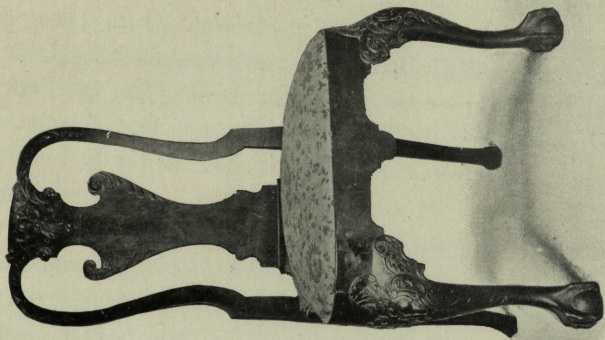


FIG. 98.—WALNUT CHAIR. Period of Queen Anne. ENGLISH; early 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 677-1890.)

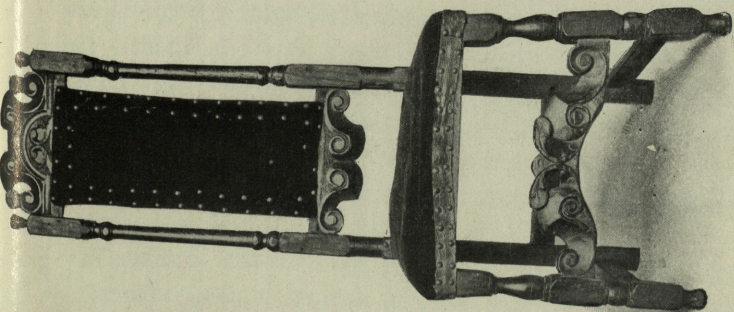


FIG 97.—OAK CHAIR. ENGLISH; second half of 17th century.
(In the Museum, No. 407-1901.)



with scrolls ending in small volutes. There were three well-marked varieties of these scrolls, the C-shape, the S-shape, and the broken S-shape. A rather exaggerated example of the last is on the chair (No. 407—1901) shown in Fig. 97; it is of oak and is probably of country make. Its top rail and the deep rail between the front legs are of the pediment style that is met with from the time of the Wentworth chair (*see* Fig. 77) till about the end of the century. C-scrolls appear in chair No. 136—1898 and also the broken S scroll, the front legs being of the latter form. Sometimes two or three of these curves appear in one chair, as in arm-chair No. 366—1903, the legs of which are joined by rails crossing each other and ornamented with a vase at their juncture; this arrangement is frequently met with in French furniture of the same period. Sometimes the scrolls are of less definite types, as in the graceful chair No. 139—1898.

A chair (No. 338—1899) of carved and turned oak with back formed of three vertical slats between the usual uprights, but without cane-work, seems an ornate rendering of the Dutch model with plain slats and is probably of the time of William III., when Dutch fashions were introduced. The ornament of the chair, however, also suggests French influence, which is even more apparent in the companion chair (No. 337—1899); the latter has only one centre panel.

The back of arm-chair No. 702—1899 has two narrow panels of cane between a central and two side slats. This seems a foreshadowing of the central slat which plays so great a part in the development of chairs from about the end of the seventeenth century until nearly the close of the eighteenth century. This chair is carved with a crown, and its front legs have a curious and ungraceful shape, resembling an elongated C with the centre convexed forward between the ends; this feature places it almost certainly in the reign of James II.

Arm-chair, No. 368—1903, has similar curves on the slats of the back ; whilst another very interesting chair of this time (No. 238—1898) shows plainly the beginning of the solid central vase-shaped slat and the cabriole leg. The slat in the latter example is combined with fine cane-work filling the spaces between it and the uprights, which in this case are moulded and not turned ; the top rail still retains the abruptly broken curves that are so frequent in this period. Another point to be noted in this chair is the slight band of inlay in the vase, which also points to Dutch influence. The caning in the movable seat is not original. The cabriole style was brought by the Dutch into Europe from the East, probably from China, where the form, doubtless taken from animal's legs, had been used, it is said, for hundreds of years. The shape in the chair under consideration is of an angular character in keeping with the top rail, and it will be observed that it is applied to all four legs ; there is only one other example of this in the Museum, the more usual method being to make the back legs simply sweep out behind.

A period now ensues when for upwards of a century a distinctly English style of chair prevailed, which for excellence of design and workmanship, convenience and beauty is unsurpassed, if indeed it has ever been rivalled by any other nation.

The time of Queen Anne has well been called the Augustan age of English history. In both epochs the nation had just passed successfully through a period of civil disturbance that threatened the very existence of government, and the agitations of that troublous time which still continued like waves after a storm, served only as a stimulus to the constellation of men of genius and high talent who appeared in each country. Moreover, the heart of both Rome and England was stirred to enthusiasm by success in arms abroad.

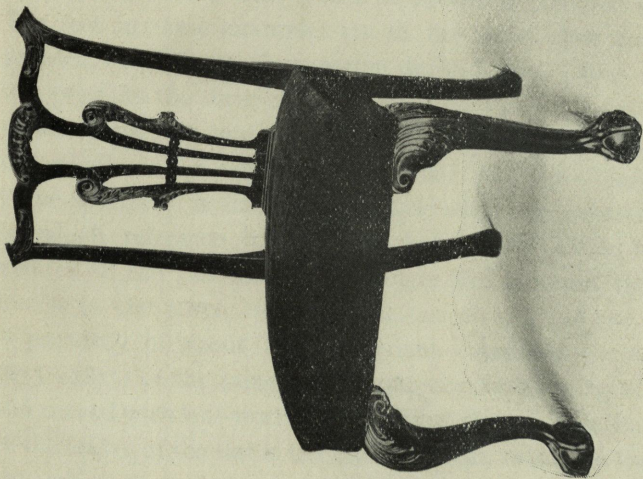


FIG. 99.—MAHOGANY CHAIR. In the style of Chippendale.
ENGLISH; first half of the 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 311-1879.)

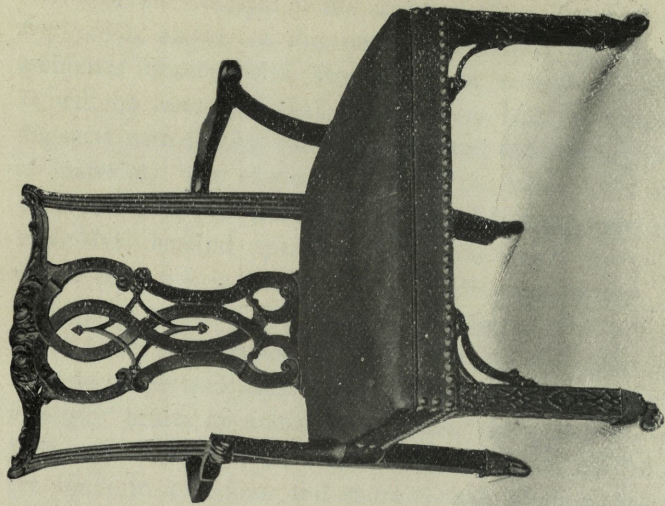


FIG. 100.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR.
ENGLISH; middle of the 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 521-1892.)



A splendid example of the chairs of the new period is No. 677—1890, shown in Fig. 98. This almost perfect model combines beauty with strength in a remarkable degree. It will be remarked that chair-makers had now learnt to dispense with the leg rails and so saved unnecessary weight of material. The elegant curves of the side pieces of the back and of the cabriole legs and the charming shape of the vase slat demand special notice; the burr-walnut with which the back is veneered lends additional beauty. This is one of a series of four chairs and a settee (No. 676—1890) which has a solid stuffed back, but matches the chairs in the outlines of the back and in other details; the arms terminate in eagles' heads, an unusual treatment. In settee No. 629—1886, and armchair, No. 630—1886, the ends of the arms are made in a curious and characteristic fashion, the arm tapering at this point curves downwards and backwards to meet its support; the back of the settee is open and fitted with two vase-slats exactly similar to the one in the chair; each slat is inlaid with a vase of flowers in coloured woods. The feet in these examples are of the noted claw and ball pattern, which is another motive derived from China, where it represents the three-clawed foot of the dragon holding the mystic jewel; it continued to be used in England till about the middle of the century. Arm-chair, No. 138—1898, also a fine specimen, is the other example with four cabriole legs to which reference has already been made. The helical volutes on the vase-slat are strikingly like those on the cartouche in the porch No. 358—1882 (*see* p. 104) and the chair is probably of about the same date. Another chair (No. 1055—1875) of the same type is noteworthy as being of oak and carved with leaf-work in the style of the previous century. In the centre of the slat is the head of a man wearing a flapped hat, which is carved out of the solid. The explanation of

this anachronism is probably either that it was made and carved by a country workman imbued with the old ideas, or that it is a deliberately archaistic production.

No. 235—1898 is of the nature of an easy chair having a high oblong back and low seat, both covered with embossed, painted and gilt leather, fastened with modern brass-headed nails. Two chairs and a settee (No. 1441 to 1443—1870) of striking and unusual appearance, date from about this period; they have movable stuffed backs in a framework with rounded corners, which somewhat resemble the shape of settee No. 676—1890. The curved front legs of each chair form an X and have a cartouche decorated with a shell in the centre; from behind the cartouche springs a rail which divides in two and passes to the back legs. The feet of the front legs are of the shape sometimes called "snake feet," which were frequently used in small tripod tables and stands of the first half of the eighteenth century, such as No. 213—1885; the settee is furnished with two groups of similar legs. These pieces of furniture are of japanned beech, decorated with sprigs of flowers.

About 1715–20 mahogany took the place of walnut in public esteem. It is not so liable to become wormeaten as the latter wood, and by its advantages of general soundness, large size, uniform grain, durability, beauty of colour and richness of figure, is unrivalled for cabinet-making.

Among the few names of cabinet-makers which have survived, the most noted are Thomas Chippendale in the first half of the century, and Sheraton and Hepplewhite at the latter end of it; these men had sufficient originality and skill to give their names to particular styles. Of Chippendale, perhaps the most eminent of the three, very little is known; he is believed to be the son of a frame carver, and it is conjectured that he began working about 1715, and died between 1762, the date of the last edition of his work, "The Gentleman

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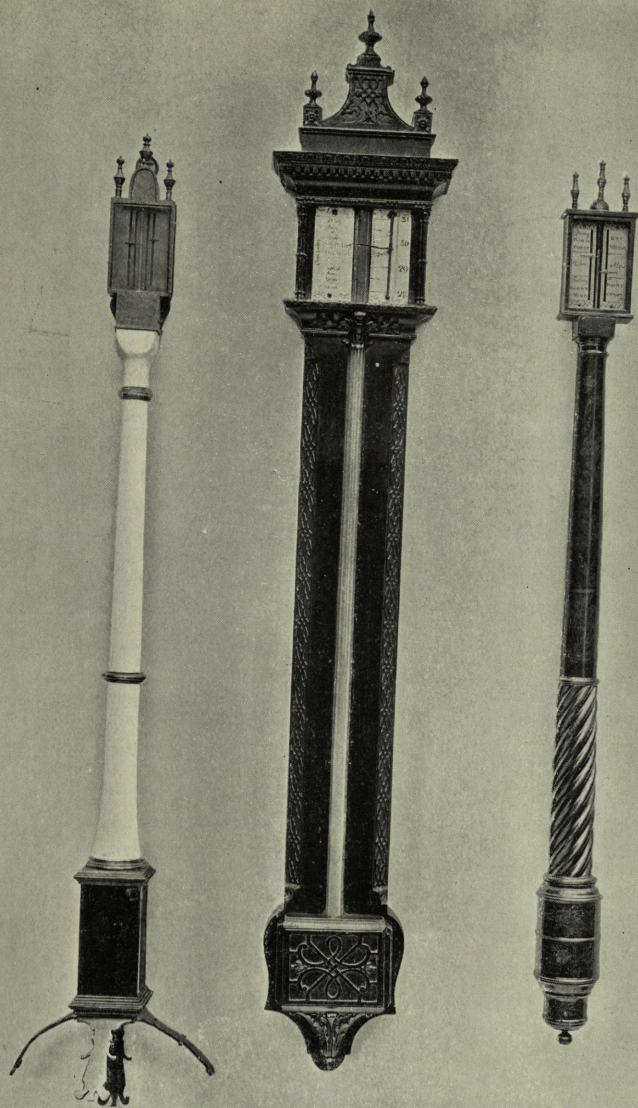


FIG. 101.—BAROMETERS. (I.) In mahogany case. Style of Chippendale. Middle of 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 363-1907.)
(II.) By Daniel Quare (b. 1648: d. 1724) in ivory and ebonised wood case.
(III.) In japanned and gilt wood case. Late 17th or early 18th century.
(The property of Lieut.-Col. G. B. Croft Lyons.)



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and Cabinet Makers' Director" (First Edition, 1752), and 1765, when a writer refers to him as "a late, very ingenious author." * His power lay in carving, and he does not seem to have used inlaying at all. He developed the Queen Anne type of chair by accentuating the top corners of the back, and so producing the "bow" shaped top rail, and by piercing the centre slat with an immense variety of ingenious designs, some of them being very beautiful; the vase form frequently disappeared, but on the whole it persisted with more or less clearness till the end of the century. Chippendale of course was not alone in his work, and there were undoubtedly many other makers; the names of some of his contemporaries who published books of designs following similar lines, are known, as, Ince and Mayhew, T. Johnson, R. Manwaring, and M. Lock. Chippendale, however, produced the most important book on cabinet-work, and he has acquired, probably with justice, the greatest reputation. There are many chairs in his style in the Museum, but none which can unhesitatingly be attributed to his hand, though perhaps No. 311—1879 (*see* Fig. 99) may be assigned to him. The designs of the Chippendale style continued to be followed until the end of the century, by various makers, including Chippendale's son Thomas, who is mentioned by Sheraton early in the nineteenth century. The back of arm-chair No. 525—1892 (*see* Fig. 100) suggests Manwaring as the maker.

The cabriole form of leg was continued during the first part of the Chippendale period, the usual forms of feet being the claw-and-ball, the hoof, the voluted, and animals' paws. Two detached specimens (No. 7—1893) are shown in the Museum.

About 1740—50 square straight legs were introduced with

* A date some years later must be accepted for Chippendale's death, if certain invoices in the possession of Lord St. Oswald, which bear the name of Thomas Chippendale, refer to the author of the "Director" and not to his son.

straining rails, and graceful little brackets were often added where the front legs join the seat; they were generally of openwork, as in the fine armchair No. 525—1892, in which the straight legs are very effectively carved with flat interlacing bands (*see* Fig. 100).

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century a form of interlaced bands was used in the back of chairs, known as the "ribbon" pattern, which came from France. About the same time the so-called "Chinese manner" of ornamentation appeared and became popular, largely through the influence of Sir William Chambers, the architect; chairs, in addition to other furniture, were decorated with a species of trellis or fret pattern, such as is seen in the carved armchair No. 559—1901, and the smaller armchair No. 884—1901, which is of beech veneered with walnut and sycamore. Another example (*see* Fig. 101) of this form of ornament may be seen in the charming mahogany case of a barometer (No. 363—1907). The Gothic revival, with which the name of Horace Walpole is chiefly associated, began a little later, and chair No. 593—1899 is a specimen of this style. Corner or "roundabout" arm-chairs are so-called from being made with one angle of the square seat pointing forwards, the chair thus fitting into a corner. There are two specimens in the Museum (No. 312—1879); the curved back-rail with its continuous arm-rests passes half-way round the chair and is supported on three slats and two turned balusters. A triangular stool (No. 926—1898) of mahogany, with fluted legs joined by rails, is a modern copy of an original in Chippendale's style.

The Master's chair of the Joiners' Company is in itself a remarkable piece of work and is further interesting as the name of its carver and the date when it was made are known. Edward Newman, who became Master in 1749, carved it in

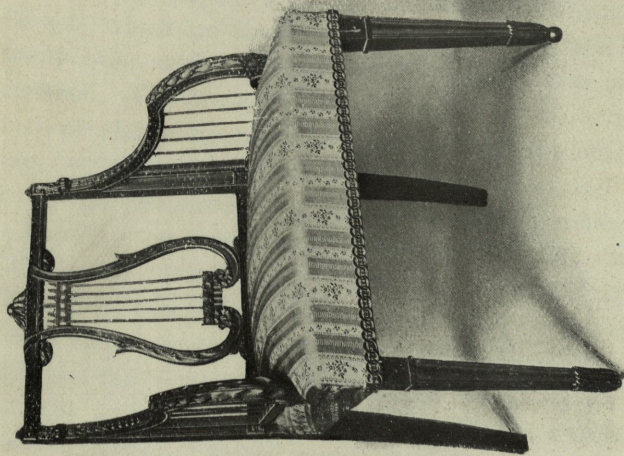


FIG. 122.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR. In the style of Sheraton.
ENGLISH; early 19th century.
(In the Museum, No. 45-1869.)

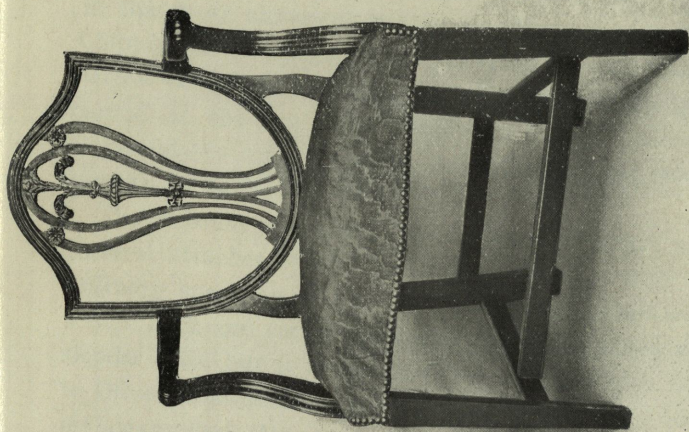


FIG. 103.—WALNUT ARM-CHAIR. In the style of Hepplewhite.
ENGLISH; late 13th century.
(In the Museum, No. 240-1898.)



1754. The design of the back shows very strongly the extravagant *rococo* taste of the time, which is also exemplified in the great chimney-piece in the Museum, attributed to Chippendale (*see* page 113). Armchair No. 596-1899 with a narrow centre panel divided into five grooved uprights and carved at the top with wheat-ears, though somewhat in Chippendale's style, probably dates from rather late in the century.

The Museum possesses a chair (No. 538-1872) to which interest attaches beyond its intrinsic worth; it is only an ordinary specimen of the kind known as "Windsor," with a high back and curved arms supported on a series of plain, slender rods, but it is one of three objects which belonged to Oliver Goldsmith (d. 1774), the other two being his plain mahogany desk (No. 540-1872), and his gilt-topped walking stick (No. 539-1872).

Sheraton published his book "Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book" in 1793-4, and Hepplewhite his "Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" in 1793; their designs, which are dated some few years before, and had probably been used for some time previously, have much in common. The prevailing style of the time was marked by more slender forms and thinner and more delicate ornamentation, which in inferior work was monotonous and finikin, but at its best possessed great charm and gracefulness.

Furniture became generally of a slighter make after the Chippendale period; the workmanship continued to be of the highest excellence, and indeed has never been surpassed. Chair backs usually retained the pierced central panel, but this was far from being an invariable rule; the legs were straight and tapering, and either square in section with "cube" feet or of turned work. Rails were again dispensed with, except when the new form of back was fitted to the

arrangement of legs of Chippendale's later period, as in armchair No. 240—1898 (*see* Fig. 103). This chair, which is of walnut, and No. 725—1897, a mahogany chair, are probably by Hepplewhite, and have the characteristic shield-shaped back. Chair No. 543—1893 is almost certainly by Hepplewhite; it has the narrow slats evenly filling the space of the shield-shaped back, which appear in Pl. 9 and 26 of his book, and are also seen in sofa No. 542—1893. The effect in the latter piece of furniture is somewhat monotonous, though in the smaller space of the former it is pleasing. In the chair is seen the half of an oval rosette, a favourite form of ornament at this period.

Some chairs had oval backs, as armchair No. 1458—1904. This and chair No. 1531—1903, which has a slight inlay, are decorated with the Prince of Wales' feathers, no doubt out of compliment to the Regent (1788), afterwards George IV.

Sheraton's handiwork is probably seen in arm-chair No. 45—1869 (*see* Fig. 102). This very charming piece of furniture seems, in the lyre decoration of the back, to show traces of the "Empire" style which was making its way into England from France, and it may be assigned to the early years of the nineteenth century. The strings of the lyre, the rods in the arms, and the band fastening the seat-covering in front are all of brass. A rather heavy chair, with a lyre-shaped back (No. 405—1872), is painted white and gilt. There is a cast in the Museum (No. 1905—13) of the front legs, with part of the seat, of a very dainty mahogany chair, carved with oval rosettes and strings of leaf ornament, that may certainly be attributed to Sheraton; it is probably a little earlier in date than the last two chairs, as it shows no touch of the in-coming style.

This style appears more strongly in chair No. 1286—1900 (*see* Fig. 104), with the palmette ornament in the back and

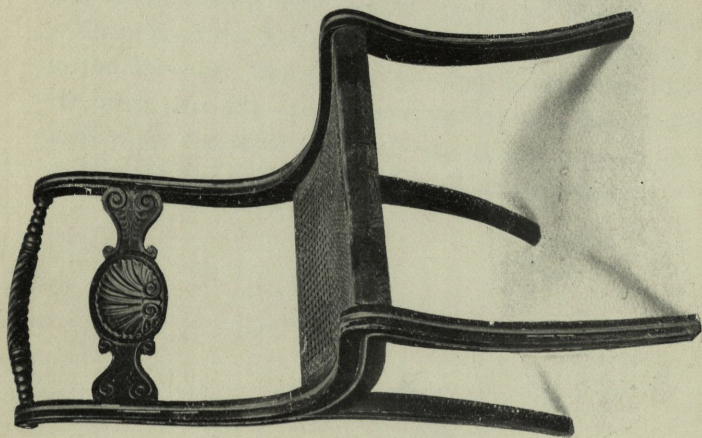


FIG. 104.—CHAIR of painted and gilt beech. ENGLISH ;
early 19th century.
(In the Museum, No. 1286-1900.)

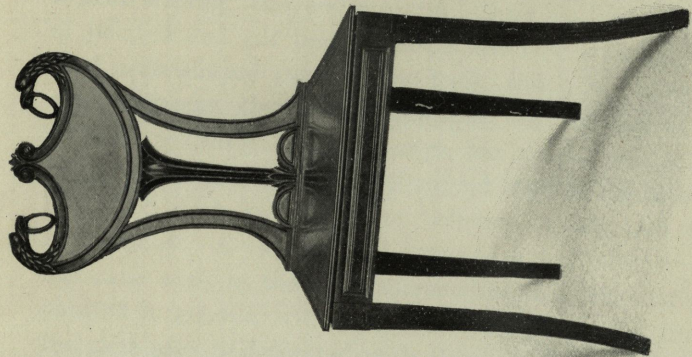


FIG. 105.—MAHOGANY HALL CHAIR. ENGLISH ;
late 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 155-1899.)



the legs splayed backwards and forwards. This chair is of painted and gilt beech, a wood which was considerably used in chair-making then, and is so still. Chair No. 336—1899, also of painted and gilt beech, reflects the new style; it has a solid, vase-shaped panel in the back, which is, however, of very different shape and treatment to the early type. Another specimen, No. 407—1872, has a solid oblong panel in the centre below a deep rail curved back at the top, both decorated with marquetry of coloured woods and slight metal inlay. A chair of the same period (No. 333—1899) has cane work in the back surrounding a small oval panel painted in *grisaille* with an allegorical figure; the front of the cane seat is decorated with Greek fret ornament. No. 335—1899, another arm-chair of this type, has small oblong compartments in the back between groups of slender bars; the arms curve downwards to meet prolongations of the turned legs. In the painted arm-chair, No. 999—1897, the arms are made as in the preceding example, but their supports rest on the seat a little behind the turned front legs.

There are three hall-chairs of late eighteenth century make in the Museum. One (No. 155—1899) is shown in Fig. 105; the other (No. 784—1896) has a vase-shaped back and round seat, while the third (No. 518—1907) has a shield of arms painted on the back. They are all of mahogany.

CHAPTER IX.

" ADAM " AND " EMPIRE " PERIODS.

The style of the period now to be considered was founded on classical art, and especially on a study of the examples found in the buried city of Pompeii, which was discovered in 1748, and in its fellow city of Herculaneum. It is marked by decay in originality and boldness of invention as compared with previous art, but in its best examples it has, as has already been said, great charm and gracefulness. It is so fully and strongly shown in the productions of the brothers Adam, particularly of the best known, Robert (b. 1728; d. 1792) and James (d. 1794), that it has received the name of the " Adam " style. An important work on architecture, which contains plates of designs, was issued in parts by these two men from 1773 until 1779, the plates being dated from 1761 onwards; the Adams also made numerous designs for furniture of all kinds. A favourite and characteristic ornament which appears frequently in furniture of this period is a round or oval rosette, or similarly shaped medallion, filled with a rayed device; it is often seen cut in half decorating the sides, or in quarters decorating the corners of objects. Other usual ornaments were floral wreaths, garlands, festoons and pendants, flowers or drapery, shell devices, vases, ribbons, flutings and the like, all treated in a slender and delicate fashion.

The brothers Adam built in 1769 to 1771 the Adelphi and various streets in the neighbourhood. The Museum has acquired two carved pilasters (Nos. 1977, 1978—1900) which formerly decorated a house in one of these streets, but

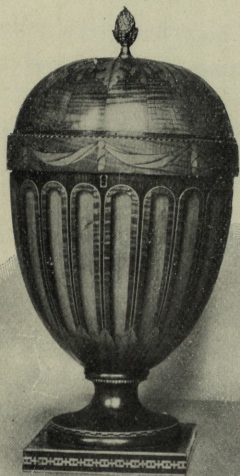


FIG. 106.



FIG. 107.

TWO KNIFE BOXES with marquetry of various woods. ENGLISH ("Adam" period).
(In the Museum, Nos. 352, 353-1870.)

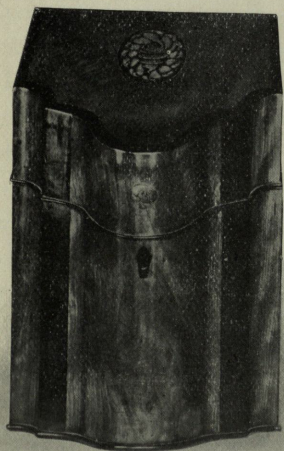


FIG. 108.—KNIFE BOX veneered with mahogany and other woods. ENGLISH ("Adam" period).
(In the Museum, No. 638-1901.)

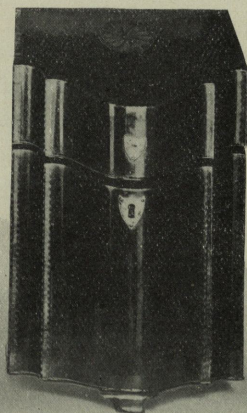


FIG. 109.—KNIFE BOX of walnut, inlaid. ENGLISH ("Adam" period).
(In the Museum, No. 311-1880.)



they date from early in the century; each is carved in high relief, with a female bust supported on a term, and is further decorated with painting and gilding.

The classical style of architecture continued in popularity all through the eighteenth century, in the second part of it largely through the labours of the brothers Adam and also of Sir William Chambers (b. 1727; d. 1796). The most important example of the latter period in the Museum is a screen (No. 191—1869) of pine, consisting of two round-headed arches supported on fluted Corinthian columns in pairs, the soffits of the arches being enriched with rosettes in coffers. A pine chimney-piece (No. 155—1892), with a carved ram's head between two vases of "Adam" type on the lintel, also belongs to the second half of the eighteenth century. A chimney-piece (No. 85—1864), with two Corinthian columns supporting the lintel, on which are very delicate applied carvings of flowers, and No. 361—1896, a chimney-piece ornamented with rosettes, flutings, and slender leafwork, probably belong to the same time.

The decoration of the period as applied to furniture is illustrated by various objects in the Museum ornamented with marquetry and painting. Marquetry of this date owed a good deal of its effect to the use of woods with a beautiful grain and figure, such as satin-wood, hare wood, tulip-wood, king-wood, amboyna, coromandel, and zebra-wood. These were often used in pieces of considerable size arranged in a kind of pattern, more definite ornament being then only sparingly used. This is well shown in a chamber organ (No. 303—1900), which exhibits, moreover, examples of rayed and also of shell ornament; it is surmounted by a broken pediment of graceful form with a vase and festoon of drapery, and was made by Daniel Prior in 1786. A dressing-table (No. 163—1906) almost entirely depends for its decoration

upon the beauty of the woods, with which it is veneered, hare-wood being principally used. A pair of dainty writing cabinets (No. 290—1876) of mahogany overlaid with satin-wood and with large oval pieces of coromandel owe their beauty to a similar cause; these cabinets show extreme examples of the slender tapering leg. Clock No. 440—1902 illustrates the use of rayed ornament as corner-pieces. Pier-table No. 325—1878 of half-oval plan contains a specimen of the half-oval medallion on a large scale, which in this instance contains various ornament; in the centre is scrollwork, next to this a band of shell-like ornament and then a band of festoons of leaves, round the foregoing being a broad band of satin-wood; the table is supported on four tapering legs decorated with pendants of leaves or buds, and terminating in a species of "cube" foot. A mahogany card-table (No. 432—1907) of similar shape has only a slight band of inlay, its other decoration being carved. Another object with marquetry decoration is a frame (No. 31—1899) with the Prince of Wales' feathers on the top and vases with flowering plants at the sides, in marquetry of walnut, sycamore, ebony, and satin-wood. Knife-boxes, which were very decorative objects, were much used at this time and were placed upon the side-board in the dining-room. Four belonging to the Museum are shown in Figs. 106 to 109, Nos. 352, 353—1870 being of vase shape, and two (Nos. 311—1880 and 638—1901) with shaped front and sloping lid; they are all decorated with marquetry of various woods. A wine-cooler (No. 636—1901) in the Museum is veneered with mahogany slightly decorated with bands of satin-wood inlay.

A dressing-table is an important piece of furniture decorated with painting (No. 635—1870; *see* Fig. 110); it is veneered with satin-wood and charmingly painted with festoons of flowers rendered in their natural colours, and with figure

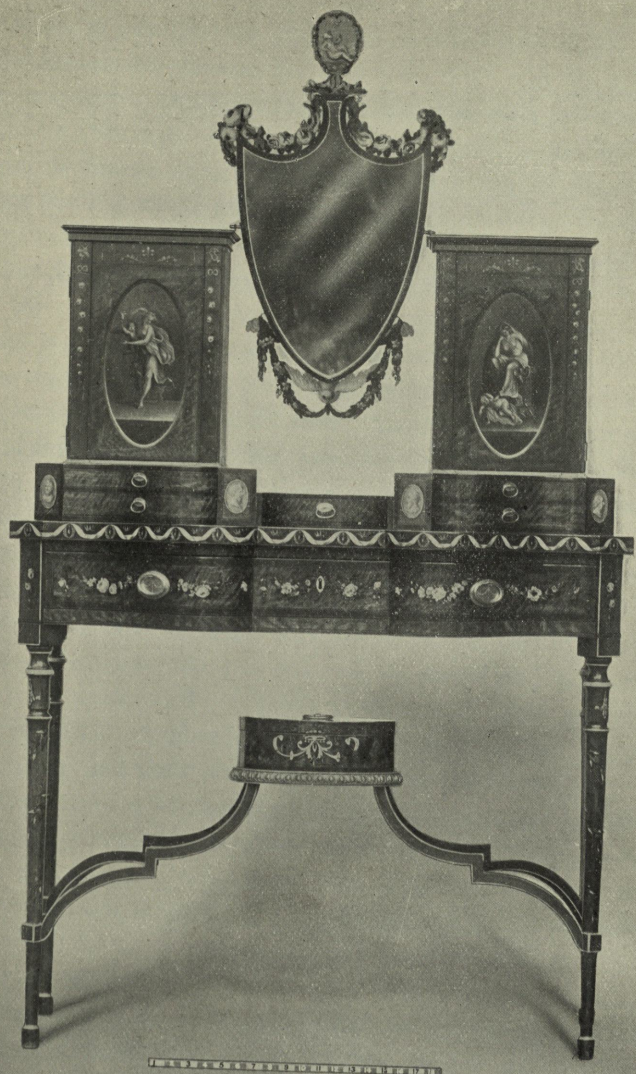


FIG. 110.—DRESSING TABLE of painted satinwood. ENGLISH; late 18th century.
(In the Museum, No. 635-1870.)



subjects in *grisaille*; the paintings are somewhat in the style of Angelica Kauffmann (b. 1741; d. 1807), and the mounts are of silver. Another example decorated with painting is a cabinet (No. 636—1870) also veneered with satinwood; its front is shaped somewhat like that of knife-box No. 638—1901 (see Fig. 109); on the top is a small landscape in a half-oval compartment, outside which are festoons of leaves and naturally rendered flowers and scrolls; a border of the "eyes" of the peacock's tail runs round the whole of the top; the front is decorated with festoons of flowers and oval medallions also containing flowers; and the cabinet is supported on short tapering legs with "cube" feet. Another specimen is a semi-oval side or pier table (No. 349—1871); the top is decorated with a half oval rayed device in the centre at the back; round this is a broad band of salmon pink, in which are two oval medallions containing female figures, and a border of festoons of flowers in natural colours; there are four gilt fluted and tapering legs, with ball feet. A pair of graceful vases (No. 322—1872) of painted, lacquered and gilt wood may be mentioned; they are decorated with groups of conventional shepherds and shepherdesses in the style of Watteau, and they probably date from 1760—1770.

The Museum possesses four bedposts (Nos. 1505 to 1508—1903) of carved walnut which are in the style of Hepplewhite, and a mahogany lampstand (No. 523—1907) with a stem very similar in treatment. A spinning wheel (No. 300—1867) of turned mahogany belongs probably to the earlier part of the century, while another (No. 475—1897) also of mahogany, bearing the name of William Mark, of Aberdeen, was made probably about 1760. The following smaller objects may be mentioned:—a stall-end (No. 28—1899) of mahogany carved with a leafy volute; a nutmeg mill (No. 896—1902) in a case of turned rosewood and zebra-wood; two small work-boxes

(Nos. 236, 237—1898) of sarcophagus shape, covered with red morocco, probably made in the early part of the nineteenth century; and a number of wood blocks (Nos. 1161—1875; 385—1896; and 1314—1900) for printing calicoes and linen, the designs on them being partly carved and partly worked out in metal pins.

Towards quite the end of the century a curious little art industry, in which the medium of decoration was coloured straw, was carried on by the French prisoners captured during the Napoleonic wars, and stationed at Norman Cross, near Peterborough, and at Porchester Castle, near Portsmouth. Little boxes, such as work-boxes, dressing cases and other kinds, trays, pictures, and frames were made, generally of pine and covered with coloured straw. The Museum possesses several specimens. The ornamentation consisted for the most part in wavy bands of colour, but more ambitious designs were also made, as may be seen in dressing-case No. 1039—1871, in which sporting and hunting scenes, scrollwork, fret pattern and other ornament are introduced. A framed panel (No. 595—1906), with a figure in a theatrical dress, is of particular interest on account of a note on the back, which reads:—"Monsieur De leparte Prisonnier de Guerre Norman Cross Le Quatorzième d'Aout mille huit cens dix." The first batch of prisoners arrived at Norman Cross in April, 1797, and all were released in 1814. A certain Dr. Strong, who visited the barracks, says, "The grasses were collected and dried by the prisoners and shaded by steeping in infusions of tea." *

Carriages were used in increasing numbers in the seventeenth century, but chiefly in London and other great towns, for the roads in the country were, till quite late in the next century,

* Information kindly communicated by Mr. E. Worthington, of the School of Science, Art, and Technology, Peterborough.

too bad to admit of much traffic even in summer, while in winter they were almost impassable. Hackney coaches plying for hire were established in London in 1625, and a proof of their popularity is that by the end of the century their number was limited to 700, and in 1715 to 800. Private

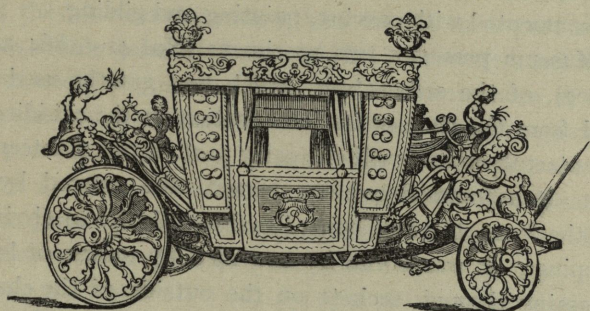


FIG. 111.—STATE CARRIAGE
Late 17th century.

and state coaches were used by the wealthy. In Fig. 111 is shown the carriage used by the English ambassador at Rome in 1688. The body of the coach was slung by leather bands from the carriage proper, and thus a good deal of the jolting on the rough roads was avoided. The same arrangement is evident in a state carriage of some fifty years later, now in the possession of Lord Darnley, (see Fig. 112); the

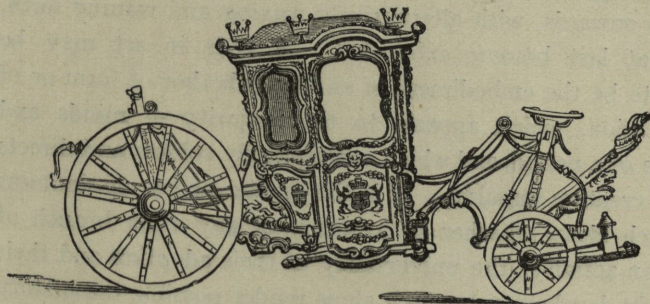


FIG. 112.—STATE CARRIAGE.
About 1740.

body somewhat resembles that of a sedan-chair, but is of larger size. This shape may also be seen in a state carriage (No. 353—1882) in the Museum, which was made for George III. about 1760, and, like the previous examples, does not rest directly on the axles. These state coaches were profusely ornamented with carving, painting and gilding.

The Museum possesses two specimens (No. 42—1864 and 322—1907), of the sedan-chair, which was greatly used in England from the time of its introduction in the middle of the seventeenth century till the early part of the nineteenth century. It accommodated one person, who entered by a door in the front, the roof being lifted on a hinge to obviate his stooping; it was borne by two men by means of long poles passing through sockets on the outside of the chair. Sedan-chairs were generally of an elegant shape and were often tastefully decorated, men eminent in their profession, like the brothers Adam, not disdaining to design them. The Museum specimens are covered with black leather and ornamented in the "Adam" style with gilt brass mounts.

With the "Empire" style the survey of English furniture is completed, for this is the last of the long series of definite styles in its history. It would seem as if the creative artistic energy which had been displayed from Anglo-Saxon times onwards, with alternatively waxing and waning force, had at last become exhausted. A style in art may be said to be the embodiment of an idea, whether of form or of decoration, which appeals to the majority of minds and tastes of a period, and which consequently colours and directs their creative impulses. It is the greater or less distinctness of such ideas, whether in furniture or any other branch of human activity, the universality of their adoption and their orderly development, which alone render possible the history of decorative art. In the period following the disappearance

of the "Empire" style, which was little more than a slavish copy of antique Roman art and at best had not much vitality, no such dominant note in art can be detected, unless the so-called "New Art" of quite recent times be excepted. The fashion of furniture during this time, which covers most of the nineteenth century, was for the most part a more or less feeble echo of former styles. In some cases the copy was excellent, as may be seen in four imitations of furniture in the style of Sheraton in the Museum, two arm-chairs and a pier-table (Nos. 239 to 241—1887) all of which are painted, and a "Pembroke" table (No. 238—1887) decorated with marquetry. Most of the original designs for furniture, however, were poor and tasteless.

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